

~~Answers~~ Answers SRAVANA 11, 1900 (SAKA) Written An.

MAHARANA BHUPAL
COLLEGE,
UDAIPUR.

Class No......

Book No

INDIAN DUST

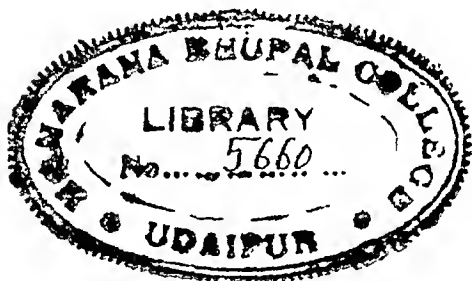
BEING LETTERS FROM
THE PUNJAB

by

PHILIP ERNEST RICHARDS

with a Foreword by

ALEX. R. ANDREAE, M.A.



LONDON
GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD
MUSEUM STREET

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FOREWORD

These letters from India are a simple record of one man's reactions to the totally strange environment of new work in India. They are not the considered statements of a full and ripe experience; nor are they consistent with anything except the vivid personality of the writer.

He was the most humble-minded of men, though decided in his views. He met experiences of all kinds with a welcoming spirit of enthusiasm and gave free and immediate rein to delight and admiration. Everything new and every fresh aspect of old things was an occasion first for rejoicing, then for thought, and finally for valuation—save that he never regarded the last stage as actually final. His mind remained open and any new experience or knowledge became a factor in a revaluation of the past. He did not hesitate to express himself emphatically at each stage and thus let his friends share in the adventure of discovering perspective and in the process of building up a judgment. Self-expression was for him part of the formative process of thought.

He was many things and thought many things, but the constant element of his spirit is easily recognized and gives unity to his life. This element was "Reverence for life" in the pregnant sense given to it by Albert Schweitzer in his *Civilization and Ethics*, though Richards himself never knew the book.

"My life," says Schweitzer, "bears its meaning in itself, and this meaning is to be found in living out the highest and most worthy idea which my will-to-live can furnish . . . the idea of reverence for life. Henceforward I attribute real value to my own life and to all the will-to-live which surrounds me; I cling to an activist way of life and I create real values."

His friendships all began and flowered in this reverence. His work was determined and guided by it. His whole mode of life was an exercise in *reneratio vite*.

If he found no home in any church or denomination, it was because every church and every religion appeared to him so bound up with and limited by its material circumambient civilization that it was impoverished and damaged just on the one side that mattered to him, the side of reverence for life. Therefore he let them all go, but held the more firmly and loyally to reverence.

His reactions to India are valuable because they are as free as any Westerner's could be from prejudice, whether of race or religion; because he greeted the new with joy and accepted it at its own valuation until he had handled and tested it sufficiently to discover values on his own account.

What he would have made of India in the long run, none can say. He was, I think, too English to sound her deeps, but we have personal testimony that he left a mark on his students which is enduring

and valued by others as well as themselves. He opened their eyes, perhaps to the West, certainly to himself, and thus to the value of a spirit which can be at once critical and creative because proceeding from a humble and open mind, obedient to the rule of a reverence demanding an activist life and the creation of real values. No small service this to his friends—and to India—though hardly measurable.

A. R. A.

PHILIP ERNEST RICHARDS

May 17, 1875—June 4, 1920

. . . fell to earth, and
mingled with the dust—the
dust that is India.

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TO INDIA!

To CONSTANTIN SARANTCHOFF

WOODEND, WALSALL,
30 May 1911

. . . We are going to India—Norah and I.

Does that announcement take your breath away? It rather does ours. By a few unexpected letters and telegrams, fallen, as it were, from the skies, I have been appointed Professor of English Literature to the Dyal Singh College at Lahore. We sail in August, to begin in September.

Could it be more surprising if we were going to Russia?

Since we are to be separated so widely, we will patch up our squabble. You are a poet in yourself beyond question, and one day you will be able to express yourself in *Feuilles détachées* as well as in letters—and as well as in life. After all, it is greater to *be* than to *do*. Some races *do* and *are* not. Other races often seem to *be* and *do* not. A paradox. You have perhaps come to England both *to be* and *to do*.

What heat! It is as if we were in India already. Our columbines in a row are glorious to look at. They are a society of the best on earth. They, indeed, *are*; although they know not what they are—all their self-expression being unconscious. The best part of us, I imagine, is still unconscious—like the columbines. Even those of us who bear

heathen land; as witness not only fountain-pens—try native Christians! One was discharged for stealing from a neighbour's house yesterday.

India is hot; but she cools herself now and then with rain, and in default of rain—with dust. The other day Norah and I were dumbfounded by a strange appearance in the sky. It was as when you and I scarce recognized the coming of a snowstorm upon the hill at Headington. In two minutes our eyes, and ears, and mouths, and hands, and necks, were being filled with dust. We rushed and closed every door and window in the bungalow (there are at least forty of these apertures). It was the coming of the cool air to replace the hot air which the sun had boiled at last off the surface of the Punjab. For 24 hours we were comparatively cool, and have learnt to bless the duststorm. Never ostracize a man however much you may object to him. He is probably capable of doing you a service!

I both enjoy and fear the heat . . . and as fortune would dispose, I am taking Wordsworth and the Lake District in large classes of gentle-minded, amiably inclined young men—as if my own thoughts did not often enough take me back to the homeland.

These young men, on the whole, strike me as the gentlest, the most highly civilized, the most beautifully sensitive natures I have ever met. They are spirits of pure love to my first-impression sight. It sounds ridiculous! It may not be strictly

true, and yet there is truth in it. Norah feels the attraction of many of them as I feel it. With this affectionate nature, they combine a disposition towards fierce criticism—and not even the newly arrived English professor is exempt.

HUMAN PORCELAIN

To CELIA RICHARDS, HIS MOTHER

LAHORE,

24 Sept. 1911

. . . Norah and I went to an Indian theatre on Friday—by invitation. It was an amateur performance connected with the Hindu festival of the Dasehra. We sat in the front row of the crowded theatre and from time to time a beturbanned servant, crouching down so as not to obscure the stage, brought to us cigarettes and sweetmeats. More interesting to me than the play was the audience. What sensitive, gentle, and delicate faces! Look at that boy in olive velvet frock-coat, white trousers, and pink turban. How beautiful the dark tints of his skin against the pale pink turban! He sees a boy friend and signals him to sit at his side. He stretches out his exquisitely sensitive hand; and his fingers quiver like a lark's wings. We have not such human porcelain in England, I think. Still, some of the men have hairy legs, and a mass of drapery hangs between them that is none too clean or graceful. The play—the first of the Ramayana trilogy—began at 9.30 and went on to the small hours. We drove home before it ended, at midnight, through a sleeping city. The narrow streets were lined with beds and on every available ledge lay figures, covered like corpses, to fend off mosquitoes. Women and

children sleep within the house, on roofs, or balconies, while the men sleep outside in the dust of the street, under the moonbeams. Their beds are simple—a bamboo frame on four legs—called literally *charpai*¹—string-woven. By day the *charpai* is set upright on one end and serves many purposes—shade, for one, with a piece of cloth thrown over it.

What helps to make India, hereabouts, so beautiful is the dust. It is over everything and in the atmosphere. The trees, nevertheless, are surprisingly fresh-looking. The earth is a pleasant sun-baked buff colour, and the dusty white clothes of the natives tone so well with it—even red brick gets dusty in colour and tones with the sun-baked earth. Yet I have not seen the fatigue that is so apparent upon an English afternoon landscape in summer. The light is too vigorous, too dazzling. Moreover, here, is no tender green to be jaded. The scorching ground of midday, and all that endures upon it—or man, or beast, or plant—are beyond fatigue. Like the sun at noon, they ray and dazzle in a glory that is indescribable. They have returned to dust—Indian dust—and await the resurrection that will begin after sunset, when the ground and the buildings have cooled, and the night sky in starry splendour pours its restoring benediction upon their sleeping forms below.

¹ *Charpai*—*char*=four—*pai*=leg.

KALEIDESCOPIC CROWD

To EDITH BETHAM, HIS SISTER

27 Sept. 1911

. . . A strong wind is blowing—it is the wind of the punkah! Outside the windows of our room, which Norah has covered with emerald gauze curtains, the sun is keeping up his intense glare. He began to glare at 7 this morning, and he will go on glaring until about 6 this evening; when he will begin to set—a large unclouded sphere of liquid gold, such as only in this part of the world the eye can look upon. Yesterday was a Mohamedan festival, and Norah and I went out in the evening to the fair that is held in an open space behind the college. There were clouds of dust, illumined by the setting sun, hovering over multitudes of human figures that were clad in every variety of brilliantly coloured waistcoat, coat, and turban, over their white tunics and trousers. Do you see that throng of dark-skinned, white-clad figures, with the kaleidoscope of colours playing over them?

Whole families kept on driving up in tongas and more pretentious vehicles. We dived into the throng, past a kinema show in a marquee—the picture of a Spanish bull fight was outside; past a merry-go-round—a rude construction on a pivot, pushed round by a couple of coolies; past some wonderful Earl's Court Wheels, fifteen feet high or so, a

clumsy construction of wood with four boxes hanging from them—spun round by sweating coolies. Past, too, a mysterious show in a tent—outside of which, for advertisement, a bronze boy in a loin cloth, with his head thrown back, was plunging into his mouth flames of fire from a fiercely burning taper. Then we found ourselves between two rows of sweetmeat stalls, with their low wood fires, and their pungent smells—the sun the while going down behind dust and a bank of trees that burned with sombre intensity. Near us was a mosque with three domes—a crescent moon bending over it. The East! The Mohamedan East!

I wish Providence had added the gift of colour to my gift of drawing! Ye gods—if Wilx¹ were here! I think Providence must have mixed up its lots in the basket that held us. He ought to be out here, and I ought to be in the office with B. Fancy my addressing B as Sir! “Yes, sir; no, sir; very well sir. You are going out, sir? Am I to do these accounts now, sir?” And in compensation for this humility I might take a walk in the rain. *Rain*—clouds, mists, hailstones, wet boots, wet streets—with lights shining in ’em! Gods! Everything here is *dry*. The sky can squeeze out no drop of moisture. The very trees pine. They grow bald a-top, and the crows perch on them like ravens on gallows. However, I’m not growling. I came out to see India, and

¹ His brother Wilfrid, an artist, who had joined his brother-in-law, an architect.

India is behaving as India should behave. Europe: with her glaciers and green fields and wet streets, one loves the better — that is all. And among strangers, kind as they are, one loves one's own family the better too.

NEW CLIMATE—NEW MAN

To J. ESTLIN CARPENTER

1 Oct. 1911

. . . My wife tells me that we have been in Lahore nearly three weeks. To me it seems like an age, so much has been crowded into the brief period. If I were to return to England forthwith, I should bear the marks of an indelible alteration. My removal here has already been justified by its psychological fruits. It is strange that I begin writing to you in so introspective a manner, yet not so strange. On the way out I was all eye and ear. . . . With such an intensity of absorption have I lived that every former interest, memory, and affection, seemed alienated from me; and now that the passion gives me breathing space and I begin to talk about the changes in my objective world, I find that the subjective world has been changed no less remarkably. It is a mistake to say that a new climate does not make a new man. It is against all philosophy—by virtue of which we know that the mind in us and that mind's world are two aspects of but one unfolding reality. The form of this dictum is Dr. Seal's.¹ Already I could return to England with a deeper and more various mind. It was wise to give up preaching and acquire a deeper experience.

¹ Dr. Bragendra Nath Seal was a fellow passenger on the voyage out to India, and P. E. R. "sat at his feet."

Well, I am sorry for so much egotism. You will like to hear about the College and the Brahmo Samaj. . . . The University imposes a large quantity of English reading. It allows one very little time for *education*, but checks thought and sedition. . . . The students are amazingly lovable and gentle. . . . I believe almost every student attends half an hour's religious teaching upon five mornings of the week. To my share it falls to give four religious talks, of half an hour each, every week. . . . Kindness is the rule in India. If a civilization is to be judged by its manners before all other tests, then India possesses a more advanced civilization than the West. The West has a good heart, but so has the East; and along with it a more natural refinement, grace, simplicity, and gentleness. Almost everyone here gives you love, and looks for it. Christian resignation seems to be practised here every day by Mohamedans, Hindus, and Sikhs; who, in worldly respects, are so poor and defenceless; whose living is a few rupees, and whose death is perhaps a puff of fever.

TALES OF WONDERLAND

TO THE REV. A. R. ANDREAE

Octr. 22, 1911

DEAR TEUTON,

Did you ever come to India? If not, I am sorry for you. If you did, I warrant you wrote few letters to your friends. That is my apology—to cover even leaving England without a message to you. I felt it was rather mean, leaving the Old Country; and yet, I felt it was truly English to do so. Whenever I am in doubt, I always judge that conscience is in the wrong, and so it was this time—as usual. The voyage, and what I have seen and heard since I arrived at Bombay, have made a new man of me. (I needed repair.) If formerly I deserved to be your friend, I am, now, ten times more deserving. Couldn't I talk if I took tea in your study! Couldn't I enchant your lively family (don't I wish I had the chance) with tales of this wonderland—Sikhs with long hair like a woman's; Jains that will not kill a fly; punkah-wallas, bhish-tres, khansamans, and the rest of the house tribe; shopkeepers who squat half-naked amid their goods as if they themselves were for sale; parrots flying over the college as if in derision of the professors; drops of perspiration as big as oranges running off your chin, even in the middle of the night while you

endeavour to sleep under mosquito curtains; mosquitoes winding their horns just outside the curtains and longing to give you malarial fever. The walled city of Lahore is as closely packed and as full of narrow streets as a beehive, and the inhabitants as interesting and as strange as bees. All the land around the city is wonderful, too, though laden with dust. A big river winds past ancient tombs and temples and caravanserais, to which pious Hindus go daily, to worship and to bathe, keeping the faith that every drop of water is sacred. Mohamedans look on, sometimes in scorn, having all the religion they want in their Prophet. The Sikh seems to have a broader mind. But Hindu, and Indian Mohamedan, and Sikh are all Indians; and it is impossible not to love them. Their spiritual nature appears in all their ways, and in their very smiles, and the looks on their faces—with a fern-like delicacy—and if you begin to love them (which you cannot help), you are gradually consumed with love; and with love at last you die, not being a god. Only a god could give India all the love a man would give India; and only a god could say of India how beautiful she is, and what greatness lies ahead of her.

We are very happy, Norah and I. The work is hard and trying in the heat, and we are a long way from home—but the spectacle of India, and her thought, compensate.

To write a letter to me will be of less doubtful benefit than to write the sermon to which Conscience beckons.

Yours ever,
DICK

THE CITY—BY NIGHT

TO MARGARET HOLDEN

22 Octr. 1911

. . . We have been in Lahore more than a month and every day has been like its fellow—a blaze of sunshine. No rain whatever. . . . Indians in native dress are extraordinarily beautiful, and their disposition is almost that of the Garden of Eden. Almost every student in the college wins love at first sight, and an affectionate relationship springs up between him and you, or her; unless you are that peculiar kind of Britisher who lives in a region as cold as the moon, or unless you are a stranger to love, and blind to the spiritual in homely form.

The city—by night! Its people sitting in wide-open oriel windows, for two or three storeys, or on the roofs under the starlit sky! If I were a painter, I should die. I am likely to be burned to death in a flame of ecstasy—while not overlooking much here that will have to be changed. The worst of it is, that with the passing away of India's ignorance and superstition, much, of what is now so beautiful, will vanish. But India will remain; nay, India will be revealed.

If I could tell you what India was like, I would; but I have not the divine qualifications. As an Englishman, I am glad that this extraordinary people have been so inextricably associated with us.

I do not feel in the least superior to the world here, nor yet inferior. There is a marvellous future in front of India—and she has had a marvellous past. It will be seen that India is immortal. When she has learned a few lessons from the West, she may lead the world. If India *were* India, Great Britain would not be so on top of the world as she is now—even in practical matters!

MISSIONARIES

*To HIS MOTHER**19 Nov. 1911*

. . . A fire of logs is merrily burning on the hearth; and we have just read your letter about the missionary working party. Are Christian missionaries wanted in India? Hardly. India has religion enough, and sometimes too much. What India needs is trade—some means of elevating herself out of the poverty in which religion encourages her to languish. Her next great need is political wisdom, which few missionaries can bring. But enough of this.

Norah and I, with a student, went into the city one evening, and we climbed up some thirty steps to the gate of the Golden Mosque—in the heart of it. Through the gateway we saw the Faithful washing their feet in water upon which floated reflections of three golden domes; and turning, we beheld a still more wonderful sight in the street below. From our elevated situation the houses seemed to be quaintier than before, and the passers-by more remarkable than we had thought them when upon the same level. Descending the steps, we penetrated to that narrow part of the bazaar, adjacent to the Mosque, where brass-dealers have their quarters. Most of these particular shops,

however, were closed; and those that remained open, refused to sell, it being a custom of their own, on every fifteenth day, to take a holiday—and not even the prospect of a good deal will tempt them to break it.

MISTAKEN SCORES

To C. LIONEL BRIGGS

22 Nov. 1911

. . . Panting Time toiling after Shakespeare reminds me of myself toiling after Time in order to catch up Xmas with Xmas letters. In the rear, somewhere, there may be another figure like the Farmer's Wife who pants after us all with a Carving Knife! Solemn reflection.

The work at the college is laborious, but confers more self-respect than another profession with which I am familiar.¹ I enjoy the work, meet it light-heartedly, and consider it useful—which is satisfactory.

. . . I have been sitting in an armchair erected upon a student's deal table as referee at a lawn tennis match—but the lawn is a court composed of mud and cowdung. In loud tones I announced mistaken scores. Not knowing the name of a single player of the four, I could not fix in my mind who was serving. Hence the umpire, in spite of his elevation, cut a sorry figure. The chair does not confer infallibility, whatever the Pope may say. Indian names—when you have heard them, you have not heard them. When they are written for you, they are still unspeakable. When you speak them they are unin-

¹ The Profession of Religion. He had left the Unitarian Ministry.

telligible. Translated, they are incredible! Gods are about us on every hand, and Perfections, and Blisses, and Servants of the Destroyer (in a land that has never yet produced an iconoclast).

. . . Yesterday we saw a holy man in a crowded street of the city, sitting under an umbrella. We knew he was a holy man because his umbrella was unusually large, and because he lived on charity. Norah thought him calm and dignified, and I thought him weak. I would not give much for his holiness, I fear. Saints are like walnuts—a good many of them are bad.

LABYRINTHINE BAZAARS

To A. R. ANDREAE

24 Nov. 1911

DEAR TEUTON,

Two letters for none, as usual, but I am good pagan enough not to let Christmas go by without greeting you and yours. A merry Christmas!—merriment after all being the best thing in the world. Philosophy is good, if it is the right philosophy; Religion is good, if one have not too much of it and does not allow it to burn one's house down; Tobacco is good, and in Holland I tasted gin—ever memorable: like the varnish off one's front door—but merriment is always good. Think of Falstaff who did less harm in the world, a parson said, than any other of Shakespeare's heroes.

Having been sweated almost to death by day and night in September, we are now subject to cold winds off the Himalayas, and sit round a log fire. Norah is supremely happy here—wandering about the labyrinthine bazaars in the narrow city, purchasing beautiful things of everyday use, with a crowd round her. While you are buying, cows and bulls pass you, brushing flank to shoulder; trains of donkeys touch you with their paniers; dogs fight; and a cooly grazes the skin off your neck with a burden of firewood he is carrying. We had a narrow escape from a frightened bull the other day. He fell

into a draper's shop and brought down bales of goods on top of him, and some children.

The work of the college is far harder than a parson's work, but is very enjoyable. The meetings of the College Council are great fun. The maintenance of discipline, and the settlement of relations between the Hindus and the Mohamedans provide us with matter for our deliberations. I sit in class with sometimes 90 turbans round me, and never wish myself back in a Unitarian chapel: but my mind dwells on pictures of happy homes in England.

DESIRABLE MATERIALISMS

3 Dec. 1911

. . . Two American missionaries, who have come to convert India to Christianity,¹ called on Norah yesterday when *I* was not in. She tells me *I* missed "nowt." Really, anybody who attempts to supply India with more religion than she already has should go back home again, and come back here again with trade and political economy; and the art of making poor people richer; and with other desirable materialisms. . . .

¹ When he disparages Christianity, he usually means Churchianity and Christian Theology.

UN-ENGLISH XMAS DAY

To HIS MOTHER

Dec. 27, 1911

. . . Xmas day passed with us in a comic and very un-English manner. From morning to night we were besieged with requests for bakhshish—from the baker, the sweeper, the barber, the tailor, the khansaman, the gardener, the water-carrier, and I don't know how many more. The most hideous brass band began to blare murdered English airs, of an early Victorian sentimental variety, immediately outside our front verandah. After tiffin, as Norah and I were settling down to quiet, another brass band blared in the same manner. We swiftly shut all doors and windows, put on our topies and rushed out the back way for a walk. We evaded the band but fell into the arms of six postmen in scarlet tunics, who handed us one letter and demanded the inevitable bakhshish. Having paid up, we wended our way, which led us into the Zoological Gardens that we had not as yet seen. The sun was blazing hot, and in the Zoo we were followed by a man who proffered buttonholes, with a profound salaam, hoping of course to receive bakhshish in return. We evaded him among the bears and leopards. . . .

To-day, in the afternoon, we chartered a tonga and drove off to some gardens, three miles distant,

taking a student, a charcoal brazier and all the apparatus of tea. We found a rich man's dwelling and garden bequeathed to the public—the house with its arcades of pillars surrounding a court with fountains; its Persian well from which patient circle-wandering oxen were watering the garden—the flat roof of the dwelling commanded a view of all this. The garden itself was cut up into squares, with trees shading the paths, and luxurious marble colonnades and shelters where the fountains used to play, and where, in the hottest weather, rain was simulated, dripping as from the roof on all sides. The fountains were still there, but they were dry. Another part of the garden presented us with a white marble seat raised upon a marble platform. "Sit upon this, Aspasia," said I, "while I imagine myself to be Pericles." Norah ascended the marble steps and sat as I desired. I was still in a Greek dream when the student bent his turbanned head and prostrated himself at Norah's feet exclaiming: "Deviji, namasthe."¹ (Norah leapt up with a laugh and a bound.) He was so overcome by his joke that he had to stuff the end of his turban into his mouth—a habit of his at any shy moment. We wandered, and boiled, and drank, and rode home again through such a landscape, lit with such a sun, and adorned with such figures as India alone can show. One in particular, I will mention—a man on a donkey; the man, far back on the hind-

¹ = Goddess, I greet you.

quarters of the animal, contentedly chewing sugarcane, his bundle before him. The dust the donkey kicked up—it lay well over his fetlocks—caught the rays of the low-lying sun—a memorial of Indian splendour and peace. In my heart were both.

AN IRISHMAN

To EDITH

3 Jan'y. 1912

. . . I must tell you about an encounter with an Irishman. "Like a lift, sir?" roared a hearty voice, as I was passing the pan-Anglican Cathedral. So I jumped into the tonga alongside of my friend, who said to the driver, "*Jeldi karo*"—and off we rattled. "You're English," he said. "I'm Irish. There's supposed to be a quarrel between us. But an Irishman is always an Irishman, and Irish girls are the best in the world! And the suffragettes. . . . It's a great problem—now, isn't it?" I answered: Yes, it was a great problem. "Well," my new friend went on, "I'm a clerk—but I've a large heart and a large brain. Have a drink? No? . . . I'll see you home. . . . Out of my way? That's nothing. . . . Well, if you won't have a drink, have a cigar." I took the cigar, and assured him I was always glad to meet an Irishman. "Command me, if I can do anything for you," he delightedly replied. "I have some notes here," . . . plunging his hand into his pocket. What would he not have given me? Norah was delighted when she heard the story, and declared she liked men drunk better than sober. It was annoying to see how this sinner won easy victories over the virtuous.

The other day I saw some white cows in the

evening, and was idiotically happy. Yesterday I looked upon some green trees, and was in the same condition. The difference between me and the Irishman is that I have no need to drink brandy to become idiotically happy.

By Jupiter! Norah and I, out walking one late afternoon, when a golden sun was sinking, met a flock of goats. They came twinkling down the dusty road, kicking up clouds of it, which the sun filled with golden fire. We saw this sight on its flank. When the goats met us, we were passing a high bank on the opposite side of the road, along which *jats* (peasants)—carrying agricultural implements and hookahs—were walking. Their figures enwrapped with heavy blankets and crowned with large turbans, were silhouetted in a living frieze against the glowing sky. Men above and goats below—transfigured in radiant dust! All India—nay, all earth and heaven in a transitory vision. An immortal moment of existence.

I am glad I came to India, and so is Norah.

MONKEYS AND MEN

TO HIS MOTHER

17 Jan. 1912

. . . As I write, visions float before me of the roads round Exeter, about Xmas time. A fine part of the world you live in memsaheb, and it's only that I am so busy looking at this part of the world, that I am not looking at your part of the world.

Norah is going to get rid of her cook, and do her own cooking, inspired by the idea that one ought not to be a fine lady, shirking one's own work. . . .

In less than a fortnight after my first acquaintance with Norah in Dorsetshire, I made her a present of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. She is now reading it for the first time. Her face and curls are deep in it, but she looks up for a moment to say "This is a rattling good book." So one's gifts get appreciated in the long run.

A man has just gone by the house with two performing monkeys. He beats a drum in a most inviting manner, to summon an audience. But to me monkeys are less amusing in their tricks than men. Norah, for instance, is far more interesting than any monkey.

SWARMS OF "WASPS"

To A. R. ANDREAE

6 Feb. 1912

. . . The more I know of Indian religions the more profoundly I am impressed with the childishness of man. The several sects are more like angry swarms of wasps than rational creatures: and into this quarrelsome community of separate wasp nests I plunge myself for four several hours of free speech every week, and so far have come off scot-free, because I belong to no orthodox faith whatever. Religious men would wreck this college: it can only be carried on by free-thinkers.

The classrooms are all doors and windows with white-washed walls. In the hot weather the punkah swings—blowing the Professor's voice down his own throat. We have two long corridors upstairs and down, with classrooms opening upon them and into each other—a noisy disposition of affairs, more especially as all the doors leading from room to room have warped, and you can't shut out neighbouring noises, nor yet the sulphuretted hydrogen from the laboratory. The average of ingenuity among the students is high, of intelligence low, partly perhaps on account of the absence of intellectual machinery in their homes. They are painful echoes of each other and of the last words of the Professor, and their essays are simply moral sermons as like from youth

ATARI

To CONSTANTIN SARANTCHOFF*26 Feb. 1912*

. . . So, the courts in Spain have declared Ferrer innocent! Norah and I read the news just as we were setting off to Atari, a country town some 10 or 15 miles from here. We carried provisions, determined to make a day of it, a student accompanying us. From Atari station, we had half a mile of road to traverse towards the gateway of the primitive town, with its high houses and flat roofs enclosed within a city wall. The sun poured down from a sky of cloudless blue; the level plain about us was green to the horizon with young wheat. The gateway of Atari in fierce sunlight; the sharp shadows under its arch; the brilliant costumes of passers in and out; and the narrow busy bazaar of which one caught a glimpse beyond the gateway, presented a picture that chained us. We passed through the city, along its narrow main street, and emerging by another gate found ourselves in dark green mango groves, bordered by lines of banana palms; and presently, in an orchard of pear-trees in full blossom. Further on, we found ourselves under a great banyan-tree by a Persian well. Cattle were feeding at an earthen trough under the shade of the magnificent tree. What beauty! What colour! What peace! What a picture of the East! There was no clock for us that day. We

set off, over narrow field paths, towards the mud walls of a village at the distance of a mile and a half. We had to cut across a main road, along which passed bullock wagons, driven by boys with bare limbs and happy faces. Having left the main road for field paths again, we settled under the shade of a tree opposite to another orchard full of pear blossom, to eat our lunch; watching the while a peasant man and woman sweeping together two vast heaps of fallen leaves which they presently crushed into huge bundles that they bore off on their heads, for fuel. The man had a bright red turban, and the woman wore purple trousers, with a yellow head drapery. The sun glared, but the day glided along like a slow dream under the cloudless blue. After feeding, we reclined on the shaded sun-baked soil; and our student, who was extraordinarily interesting both in his personality and in his reminiscences of school and family life, entertained us until we rose and entered the village. The mud walls of the windowless dwellings have but a narrow and uneven path between them. At the far end we came to the mosque, the only edifice that with domes and minaret rose above the low level of the flat roofs. By field paths again, we went to another village, surrounded by wheat growing right up to its walls, and entered by a narrow road that flanked a large pool and a row of tethered cattle. There was scarcely room to get by. Some gentle village folk followed us, and we saw much industry going on in

the courtyards of dwellings, some of which were scrupulously clean. But the Indian villager, on the whole, seems too fond of cowdung. He uses it for fuel; and cakes of it, drying, adorn much wall space—it looks very decorative. Also it is used as an ingredient for mud plaster, and, in effect, is very clean because it prevents the plaster from crumbling or rubbing off into dust. These uses, however, are woeful waste of the good manure that their fields lack.

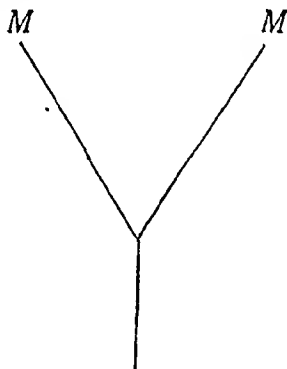
Halting in the mango grove on our way back, we saw a bees' comb, in the shape of a crescent, suspended from a huge bough above us. At our feet were many flowers, some of them familiar, and one a perfect replica in vivid blue of our scarlet pimpernel. I styled this flower, tiny as it is, the Prometheus; for it is as great an achievement to have stolen the blue of the Indian sky, as to have snatched fire from the sun.

Next day, I paid for the long exposure to the sun by a sharp attack of tummy trouble. Norah escaped scot-free. She is a thorough Indian! Our latest discovery has been the moonlight. We saw a bungalow with its high terrace and the trees about it glorified into the most romantic realm I ever gazed upon, dreaming or awake. And last night, a waning moon immediately overhead was casting the pattern of bare tree branches upon the ground—a whole world in each device or invention—and for depth and stillness, more than mortal.

MONKEY?

5 March 1912

. . . Life every day becomes more interesting—the class work goes on famously. I will tell you an anecdote. Reading a book with our first-year boys, we came upon the word evolution. I explained that we did not come from monkeys: that the monkey and the man had a common ancestor. I drew a figure on the board like this:



showing the branching tree of life, and putting one M for man and another for monkey. A boy with his face brimming all over with mischief jumped up in his seat, and said: "Please, sir, which side is the monkey?" I pointed to him and said: "On that side." A roar of laughter from the class, who were most attentive from that time on.

ESTRANGED BRAHMO SAMAJ

To A. R. ANDREAE

26 March 1912

. . . Why do we teach Religion¹ in this college? For the sake of emoluments, of course, secured to us under the founder's Will upon this condition. Otherwise do you think that I, at least, would be so officious and so ready to take up an impossible task?

In spite of all improbabilities, however, I am prepared to declare that my religious periods are a success. I get largish classes of students to listen to me—when I am in luck—and hitherto I have offended neither Hindu, nor Sikh, nor Mohamedan. But I have estranged the Brahmo Samaj who don't know what they stand for when they see it; and I hear of two Christian missionaries putting their heads together and deciding that my statement concerning St. Paul, that he expected the end of the world in his own lifetime, was "true but exaggerated." The complaint of the Brahmo Samaj is that I am flippant because I have abolished prayers and never hesitate to joke if the god of Humour sends me anything.

The truth of the complaint is that the orthodox Brahmo Samaj addresses delivered in this college

¹ To avoid misunderstanding, a capital R is used here to distinguish Religion itself from formal religion.

are so dull that the students do not listen to them. And they want to lay this disrespect at my door. One of my fellow professors has been pumping students to get at my ideas. I had the man in and laid my soul open to him and he said: "Yes, yes, yes. But such a doctrine is liable to be misunderstood." I had had experience of the danger, I assured him.

Meanwhile, if I am given extra English classes and my services as religious instructor are discontinued, I shall not be surprised, and I shall be both glad and sorry—for the religious periods bring me very near the students.

Gad, sir! If you came out here I wonder what you would think of Anglo-Indians. I have met but occasional samples of them, for neither Norah nor I seek society, except Indian society. Of course there are plenty of Indians who run after favour with the ruling power, and finely the ruling power is fooled occasionally, according to accounts. Thank goodness, there are wiser heads at Home, and all this of course is compatible with much good work in all departments of administration. But the English administrator, the better he is, seems to get the more inaccessible. I have met an army man, a capital fellow, who though he makes every "native" take off his shoes before him, succeeds in getting liked in spite of it. In fact, it is impossible for anybody who knows him not to like him. His effrontery as "top dog" is really rather comic.

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The socialistic close of your letter did me good. It came just after dining out in Anglo-India, where Coal Miners and Socialists had been heartily denounced—and I needed a hand stretched out to me.

WINDOW-SMASHING

To EDITH

5 April 1912

. . . When I get letters from you or the Heavitree people I am filled with an impulse to answer immediately—with an intoxication of communicative zeal. I find, after repeated experience of this kind, that I am this sort of fool. I must love you more than I thought; though probably I should quarrel with you over the colour of your carpet or over something else, if I dropped in through the window or the tiles. It is *you* put windows in my mind, because of your charming talk about windows. Of course every suffragette thinks a good deal about windows just now. I myself, a humble-minded man (I beg pardon for hinting that I am not a woman), have never yet ceased to marvel at the great window-smashing in Regent Street and elsewhere. It fills me with joy!

My writing is rocky I fear. Perhaps because I was disturbed in the night by a damned mosquito which had got inside the curtains supposed to keep him out; and later on, by the wind. Our beds were outside in the compound, since it is impossible to sleep indoors. But I did not mean to write this. I meant to say how I chortled over the brave free atmosphere of your letter. Whence did you get your daring brain?

Norah is chortling over your letter and *you* at this

moment. She laughs across at me and asks: "Why does she call you Toby?" "Because I call her Mumbles." "No," says Norah. "Toby is the name of a dog: and she calls you Toby because you stand on the hearthrug and growl!"

What you say about the *Titanic* and women-saving is very good. Excuse this praise or flattery from a m—n. But it is the race instinct that sends the women off first, because if half the men of a nation perished they could restore the population and strength of the country, provided they were not restrained by conventional marriage laws.

A student has come in, and I have had to stop to hear him read admiringly a few sentences out of an article of mine in a Calcutta review, inquiring whether a student of Science can be a religious man. The answer seems to be that science is superior to religion. "It is really a very fine article," says the student. I will write another!

But in this hot weather writing is the devil. I have few thoughts and fewer words. So I have taken to reading through my grand collection of sermons and destroying 90 per cent. of them. Only those survive which contain facts or quotations of value or trains of thought. All the piety and all the exhortation has gone off in basket-loads to the dustbin!

Norah and I love you very much—and B.

ERNEST OR TOBY OR WHAT YOU WILL.

NO "PROFESSOR"

To CONSTANTIN SARANTCHOFF

LAHORE,

21 April 1912

. . . One thing I have gained by coming out to India as a "Professor"—two things, rather. (1) The knowledge that I am no "Professor." (2) The knowledge that never again can I be a "Reverend." I seem to myself to have been masquerading up to now. I seem suddenly to perceive that all propriety and accepted opinion are founded upon huge mistakes.

I am no Professor, because I am utterly unable to play a pompous part or a "disciplinary" part towards the students. I love them too well, and I hate pomp and military drill too much. Moreover, I am unable to teach the required commonplace and decorous ideas. When I conduct a class through some poem or the pages of some novel and I am asked for remarks, I immediately find myself in conflict with the orthodox way of whittling down poets' meanings, which alone helps students in the examination room. If the poet says "Love," I say Love, and not marriage. If the poet says "Revolt," I say Revolt, and not the blessedness of things as they are. This all gets in my way as a Professor, but still more hindering is my refusal to wear high collars and frock-coats, to talk of myself as if I were God,

to cultivate hypocrisy in order to subdue the respect of the superstitious, and so on. The thing here they call *education* stinks in my nostrils . . . and yet I would undertake to teach literature better than any professor I have yet met. I am a Professor if I am allowed to be not a Professor.

It is part of my contract to teach Religion. I have been teaching Religion four times a week for half an hour each time. Fancy "teaching Religion" to Hindus, Mohamedans, Sikhs, the Arya Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj, and I don't know how many more conflicting sects. I immediately made it my business to try to put humanity in the place of narrow-mindedness. Hindus will not eat with Mohamedans, for example. I determined to attack all customs of this kind, and all beliefs that led to them. In fact, I set out to make all orthodox theologies ridiculous. But this had to be attempted at the same time as one avoided bringing about a religious explosion. My plan was a simple one. I showed the students first of all that I liked them. I joked, flattered, told tales, drew pictures of England, etc., and actually got the classes to look forward to listening to my half-hour of talk with them. Then I became theological. I entered into many theological ideas and got the class laughing at them. "Ours the only true religion!" "Everybody damned but us!" etc., etc. when it came out indirectly—just a hint or a breath—that all theologies which divided men were like the Christian theology, which we had laughed at.

Hindus, Mohamedans, and Sikhs all clearly understood my disdain for orthodox revelations—their own included. Then I began to dilate on the harm wrought by religion, and by the worship of God. Finally, I suggested that the love of Nature and of Man was better than any religion yet seen. The consequence is I have the reputation of the only Professor here whose religious discourses are worth attending. I have carried on like this and offended neither Hindu nor Sikh nor Mohamedan—but I forgot the Christians! I forgot the missionaries in Lahore! Some of my statements about Christianity have come to their ears, and I am regarded as a very dreadful person. And I forgot the other religious teachers of the College!

So—I am neither Professor nor Reverend. I am a lover of life, and a believer in volcanic forces of life that heave up from underneath all that is known or anything that is commanded or forbidden, shatter all conventional and pious rules, and produce the greatest practical inconveniences. You are one of the few persons who can understand what I mean.

Love to you,

DICKON

TO SRINAGAR!

To WILFRID

ON THE WAY TO SRINAGAR,

30 June 1912

. . . Here we are in a dunga, bound for Srinagar. A strong stream, fed by glaciers, is flowing against us, and the captain of our crew anticipates that we will not reach Srinagar before 10 a.m. to-morrow. We shall tie up to the bank for the night. We had intended to go by road all the way, but at Bara-mulla—thirty miles short of Srinagar—Norah fell in love with this particular dunga, so we dismissed the tonga and elected to be towed the rest of the way—fortunately; or we should not have seen last night's sunset and moonrise on Lake Wular, nor should we have experienced the petty storm thereon. . . . I am reduced to a feeling of helpless imbecility when I attempt an impression of any part of our wonderful journey, that will have lasted a week to-morrow evening at 10. Our lake experience, as a sample. We arrived at the filthy but picturesque town of Sopor about midday, and tied up for some hours [description omitted]. In the evening we left this unspeakably filthy town, and punted ourselves out upon the lake, that was surrounded by narrow flat green fields; and beyond these, a great rampart of blue and snow-clad mountains. Imagine the picture!

Our three punters were on a narrow elongated prow, and as we sat on our observation deck, we had immediately before us their heroic toiling figures against the lake and the mountain background, illumined by the rays of the sinking sun—and if anybody thinks Holman Hunt no colourist he should have seen the swarthy skin of our punters, the vivid colour in the water, in the mountains, and in the sky. Before the sun had set the moon began to rise over a snow-clad ridge. We watched it move, and followed its first faint steps of light over the lake. After the sun had set, we suffered loss—until the afterglow. Then came a puff of wind that set up a lop on the lake and caused some consternation to our crew. They made for the shelter of a nullah, or stream, a short way off, but they had to round a long tongue of field, and avoid being blown ashore, or anywhere else. They worked like furies with their long poles; and the afterglow faded beneath the storm, while the moon rose higher. Lake and sky changed to green, and what the mountains and snow fields were like, I protest I cannot say nor scarcely can remember—though I never lifted my eyes from them.

A saheb we met on the road advised us not to take a dunga at Baramulla, because it was so boring being towed 30 or 40 miles to Srinagar!

. . . Our roof, walls, and window-shutters are

of woven reed—beautiful, and cool, and weather-proof. The inside of the bulwarks has a carved border. The interior is as beautiful as our cottage at Walsall, which is saying much! The motion is delightful.

With love—*write!*

E.

TO SONAMARG!

To WILFRID

GANDARBAL,

10 July 1912

. . . We have seen, with anguish, trains of loaded ponies starting off, with tents and camping apparatus, up the mountain road to Ladakh. We have seen happy marchers, starting off blithely with bare knees and alpenstocks. The glory seemed suddenly emptied out of our holiday when the dunga came to rest. This state of mind has not lasted long; for we too will join the happy marchers, but first we must go by shikara to Srinagar for tents and provisions. Norah will ride a-pony-back. I shall tramp. To Sonamarg!

ONLY SNOB IN SONAMARG

To HIS MOTHER

SONAMARG,

22 July 1912

. . . We have been here a few days, and it looks as if we shall stay for at least three weeks longer. Three days' marching brought us here. The last march was by the riverside up a ravine 9,000 ft. high on either side and more than 15,000 ft. above sea-level. Towards the end of our trek, looking up, we saw the summit of a mountain glistening with snow, through clouds. It seemed to be overhead. I had never seen anything so grand until we reached our destination, when we found ourselves upon a green "marg," or meadow, covered with flowers and surrounded by snow-clad mountains in an immense circle. The Greater Himalayas!

. . . Our nearest neighbour here is Col. C——, in command of a cavalry regiment—we have much to say to one another. Everyone here is friendly, and even Colonels mix with Professors. *I* am the only snob, I believe, in Sonamarg; for there are several missionaries here, advocating quite an antediluvian type of Christianity, and I do acknowledge to feeling a cut above them. They are taking their holidays merrily enough, while heathen souls are being damned, but I suppose the damnation doctrine is now extinct,

even among missionaries. Then why convert the heathen?

. . . At this point I was interrupted by a visit from a lady who said that Norah smiled so sweetly at her this morning when she passed our tent, that she felt she must call. The lady is no longer young, and she has been all over the world, and is going from here through parts of China to Korea (she comes from Japan via Calcutta). She, too, is a missionary—self-appointed and unpaid. Her mission is temperance. Putting it all together, it seems to me that you should turn missionary if you want a really good time.

CHARLES LAMB IN THE HEIGHTS

To J. ESTLIN CARPENTER

SONAMARG,

22 July 1912

. . . The second day after our arrival here the postman brought me, from you, Lucas' *Life of Lamb*. So I am reading the book about the town lover in these inaccessible heights.

All religious people should read it, and learn what it is to be real.

This is no more than a brief note of thanks, since amid surroundings that claim so much of the attention, it is impossible to collect the thoughts. My thoughts also are so seldom worth the collecting that I am the less reluctant to give them a holiday.

. . . This letter will be delayed, I am told, by a breakdown on the road—the main road to Tibet, no wider than two ponies abreast—the principal artery connecting India and Central Asia!

AMARNATH

To J. ESTLIN CARPENTER

SRINAGAR,

28 Aug. 1912

. . . Has it ever occurred to you that it is a pity University vacations ever come to an end—especially those spent in Kashmir? We are just returned to Srinagar from Islamabad, which was our starting-point for a ten days' march with tents and ponies to and from the Cave of Amarnath. After a week of dunga life here we shall set out upon the week's journey home. You can get back faster, but we prefer to go slow rather than rush the scenery.

[A detailed account of the march up the Lidar Valley, omitted.]

. . . Northwards (from the summit of a mountain 14,000 ft. high), looking across the Amarnath valley, which is like a gulf below (you see as far as the edge of a shelf of snow twelve feet beneath you, and then—space)—northwards rises the Amarnath mountain with its cave; an utterly barren and rocky height, with strata bared to the eye twisted this way and that, and precipitous outlines that appear to be hurling down from heaven! The Cave has massive square walls and a massive architrave, and from any moderately distant point of view is no inconsiderable feature of the mountain's

architecture. Upon closer acquaintance it is a shallow damp recess, with water trickling from its roof of gypsum, and rising from a spring in a rocky basin that freezes into two slabs of ice, upon which, when we arrived, we found an early and stark pilgrim laying mountain flowers.

I could not help being struck with the religious associations of the place as well as by its impressive grandeur. The same kind of genius, as in the Hebrews selected Sinai as the home of religious awe, chose this peculiarly sublime place with its peculiarly sublime surroundings, as in some sort the dwelling of the god Shiva. I am not clear as to Shiva's association with the place: I am not curious as to the gods: I know that the religious founders who fixed upon the Cave were inspired by the awe of Nature just as I was that day; and, as the Hebrews were, before they learnt too much about Jehovah. I was content with this key to the past, whatever later grown-up legends may have to say! Moreover, I went and returned not without spiritual profit, and so I, too, in my fashion, have accomplished a pilgrimage.

We met the pilgrims on our return march between Tanin and Pahlgam. They were not in any particular order, but near their head marched the priest, stark naked, who will lead the torch-lit procession when it goes up the awful track from Panjitarni by night. There were hundreds of sadhus with loin cloth and long hair, their bodies covered with wood ash.

Some of these wore mitres, I was delighted to see—of the exact shape considered orthodox by Anglican and Catholic Bishops. The rest of their costume, or lack of it, would scarcely have suited a consistory, or the House of Lords! Along with them marched wealthier and saner Hindus, and palanquins came along on four stout but groaning shoulders, bearing women and children. The road was jammed with pack-ponies also; and coolies, loaded with camp equipment for the better-to-do. The sadhus were the most striking feature of the procession, which was about four miles long, the processionists walking mostly in single file and over ankles in mud, toiling and panting for breath. The aged men and women, and the invalids—marching or carried—were tragic. Norah spoke to several who confessed they did not expect to return. Already the toil of the journey was telling on them, and ahead lay the 1,500 ft. ascent beyond Tanin, the climb from an elevation of 1,200 to 1,400 the day after, and the 2,000 ft. descent, and then the straight-up awful ascent and descent from Panjitarni. Many would not arrive, much less return. The weak ones and the more fanatical pressed along, crying to themselves: "Amarnath, I come, I come!" A few years ago when there were 12,000 pilgrims, 500 died on the last stages of the pilgrimage and the first of return—the cold at an elevation of 14,000 ft. is bitter, and even at the 11,900 of Panjitarni. Their bodies had to be carried five miles on the return march, to a birch wood—and there burned.

The pilgrimage was late this year, and therefore our procession was small—about 2,000 took part in it.

So much for one of our religious spectacles. Here's another—much slighter. At a village in the Lidar Valley we allowed ourselves to be taken to a cave, the passage to which penetrated for many hundred yards into the bowels of a limestone hill. Two village guides accompanied us with lighted pieces of touch-wood; and bowing our heads in the low passage, we stumbled along, frightening scores of bats; and we ourselves were dreadfully alarmed lest we should tread upon a snake. In a side cave off the main passage, the guide in front of us paused; and, groping in a black hole, produced several pieces of charred wood; and finally, a thigh bone, that he assured us were the relics of a holy man, who had lived in that cave for five years without seeing the light of day. Looking steadily at the thigh bone, I said it was satisfactory to have sufficient evidence that the "holy man" was dead. Then we beat a hasty retreat into the open. Religion! A gruesome subject, my masters.

THE ROAD

TO HIS MOTHER

LAHORE,

12 Sept. 1912

. . . We are triumphantly arrived in the bungalow again from Kashmir, after 200 miles in tonga; and from Rawalpindi, in train. The conservative habits of tonga drivers did not allow us to proceed via Abbotabad; so we again saw the Murree landscapes, which are great. Twice we started at 3 a.m. that the pony might have the cool of the day—or night. Rushing along precipices by starlight I felt like a burglar who had broken into the house of the mountains and the moon. I did not steal anything except plenty of dust and a lot of fresh air. It was mysterious coming upon long trails of bullock wagons, which move all night and rest in the afternoon heat. The driver of the first wagon is usually half awake, all the rest are asleep under their awnings. The bullocks keep patiently to the road, one wagon behind the other; but imagine the business of passing some twenty of these on a narrow road, with your wheel within two inches of the steep hill slope.

Behind us came a tum-tum, a cheaper vehicle than a tonga, very high and ramshackle, with a sorry steed in the shafts. The tum-tum carried a driver and four pilgrims returning from Amarnath.

I was just thinking I shouldn't like to ride behind such a poor old plucky but bony hack, when down it fell and the driver on top of it, and two fat pilgrims on top of him. Our tonga walla went back to help. When the horse was in the shafts again our driver had a fit of uncontrollable laughter at the idea of his friend, the tum-tum driver, meeting with such an accident.

We have been busy all day getting rooms ship-shape again. It will take a week. Norah said to the khansaman, "To-morrow Ram Parshad will wash the paint" (after the whitewashers). A hurt look came into the eyes of the khansaman. "The paint has *been* washed!"

WALKING IN WALES

*To WILFRID**First Sunday in Octr. 1912*

. . . Your last letter concludes with a proposal to go a walking tour again in Wales. Let us please our fancies with this proposal, for nothing in life is better than being on the Road. The world is an inheritance to those that inherit it. Few do. What has been of greater value to us than that tour? Some of the best recollections I have are of tours on foot or on bike, with you or with Norah, or with you both. I have been telling Mother that the pleasantest part of Kashmir, judging from this present point of view of recollection, was the most arduous part of the holiday—the being on the march over the mountain roads, with the train of ponies. So I will go to Wales again if I can, and in company with a wisely chosen companion is better than in solitude, although a solitary journey is not without its charms.

We had an American to dinner the other night, a Christian missionary, professor in the Xtian College here—much better than his nonsensical errand—and he has worked in farms in Iowa, and paid his own university expenses by being a waiter, etc. Fancy a country where that is possible for young men. He told us that the farmers in Iowa, in the winter, when for six weeks there is idleness on the farm, attend college, and take a six weeks' course

READABLE ENTERTAINMENT

To WILFRID

27 Oct. 1912

. . . I am sorry I have sent you so many sermons of late. The devil is in it. I have sent all my jokes to Mother, who will be shocked, I fear. Whereas I should have contrived the matter the other way about.

I am re-reading *Pepys' Diary*, with huge entertainment—human, historical. I heartily like and approve of Pepys, the man. The silly fool who puts notes to the book tries to make him, here and there, a laughing-stock; but I am quite of a different opinion. I laugh—but I never despise, like this peacock editor.

There is really some readable entertainment in English. Fielding, and Smollet, and Sterne have been huge company, and I wish I could lay hands on Richardson, but Lahore bookshops know nothing of him. Sterne is damnably indecent; but Sterne, when he is at his best, is to my mind at the very top of English literature, and I say *Amen* to Goethe's appreciation of him as one of the rarest of spirits. Thomas Hardy—to think of moderns—delights and puts me off in equal measure; but *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is flawless. Most of his other books annoy me by the deliberate provocation of the tragedy. Some minute whim, or crank, in the mind of the hero or heroine (not conceived with the delicacy

of Othello) brings on the catastrophe, and one is inclined to say the fools get what they deserve; and to avoid the pain of reading about them. *Tess* put me into a trance of delight with its description of a Berkshire farm, but then I saw the crack opening which need not have opened in one of the leading person's minds, and I never finished the story. *Two on a Tower*, in spite of its impressive astronomy and its villagers, defeats my pleasure in the same way. But *The Mayor* is a treasure after three times reading.

How I love the soul baptized in matter of the strong English writers—all I have mentioned. They are poets in the midst of the commonplace, like the Dutch painters: half frogs, half angels—half in mud, half in air. But I prefer the angels with dirty wings. May I show you a pinion? Tennyson and Browning are but shadows beside them.

Love,
E.

P.S.—A gun has just gone off and a bell has begun tolling. The gun is in the cantonment, and marks noon; the bell is in the Roman Catholic cathedral. The remarkable thing is that every day these two sounds are heard at the same time, both man and God keeping the same moment. Which suggests to me that punctual co-operation between man and God is more possible than many of us in our despair have considered.

EARTHQUAKE

LAHORE,

17 Nov. 1912

DEAR WILX,

A night or two ago Norah and I were driving home from a dinner party; and when we got somewhere near our own house a noise crept into my hearing—an indescribable, startling sound; followed by the barking of numberless dogs and cries of human beings. I thought I must be going mad—such inexplicable pain was in the air. Tragic cries in the dark night, as though all living things round about us were suffering. A thrill of horror made me shiver and I found my heart beating at a quickened pace. I dissembled my fears, however, to Norah, and merely remarked that it was a noisy quarter of Lahore we lived in. Norah agreed, but I discovered afterwards that she had had the same kind of feelings. The next morning in the Professors' Room I was saluted with the question "Did you feel the earthquake?" I found it had occurred while we were in the tonga, and we had not felt it because the tonga shakes so, even when there is no earthquake. It was rather severe; many people expected their houses to fall, and rushed out of them in panic. An Indian-edited newspaper here has a foreboding article upon the increasing frequency of earthquake shocks in Lahore, and would evidently address

a letter of remonstrance, if it could, to the Supreme Ruling Power for "frightfulness" and "repression."

. . . Get Morley's *Voltaire* out of a lending library. It is good free-thinking reading. His *Compromise* is good too.

Edith is silent, which I suppose is not to be wondered at. Norah is silent too, in the next room. I suppose it is photographs (printing them), or Home newspapers, or Nietzsche which she devours, or dramatic contemplations. Whatever it is, it isn't darning stockings or getting dinner. The khansaman looks after the dinner, and the stockings look after themselves.

We have cold weather now—the gift of the Himalayas; and fires in the evenings. Wood fires. The temperature makes an extraordinary difference to Norah and me. All manner of work becomes possible that was quite out of the question in the heat. I love the sight of a thermometer now; formerly, I detested it. Did you ever cherish angry feelings towards a thermometer? Did your peace of mind ever toss upon the vagaries of a column of mercury?

Yesterday morning, when I was settling down to a little private contemplation, I was informed a student wished to see me. I went to the verandah in a bad temper and found a well-known bore who is always provided with questions for the authorities—and suggestions. He evidently wanted to come in and sit down and have half an hour or so's self-

important chat, but I kept him on the verandah. "Well, what is it?" A look of mysterious confidence spread like a mist over the cloudy eyes of the student. He almost whispered, "Why has the House Examination been set so early this year?" "That is not my business: that is the Principal's business. What next?" He drew a manuscript from his pocket. "The Editor of the College Magazine has returned me this poem to be put into prose." "That is not my business: that is the Editor's business. Anything more?" "Do you advise me to write this poem in prose?" "If you want to sing anything, sing it in verse; if you want to say anything, say it in prose. That is not my business: that is your business." A laugh, fortunately, spread over my face, and the student laughed too; otherwise we might have parted with ill-feelings. He went.

I'll go too—into this envelope.

Love,
E.

AN ENORMOUS LIE

*To HIS MOTHER**24 Nov. 1912*

. . . What a charming, witty, delightful letter you have sent me to-day. What interesting incidents, what happy turns of expression. Now before you drink up too much of this flattery please realize that the two preceding sentences are pure humbug. I haven't had any letter at all to-day. The Sikh public holiday, or else the cyclones, or else something else, has made the Bombay mail late, and hence I am writing to you in answer to your letter before I have received it.

There is a nice fire burning in the drawing-room while I write this. Norah made it, but Norah isn't enjoying it. She is sitting in the cold developing photographs, while I occupy her chair by the hearth and bask in the red flames.

A Sikh student came to see me just when I was sitting down to tell you the enormous lie which deceived you so cleverly at the beginning of this letter. Now if there is one thing that a Sikh objects to more than another, it is a lie; for he is deeply religious. I was half afraid of the Sikh therefore, thinking he had found me out. But he hadn't. He wanted me to write him a recommendation to Edinburgh University, and he wanted me to advise him what he should do when he got to Edinburgh.

I advised him to wear warm clothes, and if any Edinburgh student made fun of him not to get angry; but to make fun of him in return. I told him that the Scotch were also deeply religious, but that the signs of Scotch religion were just the opposite of the signs of religion in the Sikhs; as, for instance, the Scotch wear their hair short whereas the Sikhs wear it long. But both Sikhs and Scots, for the love and glory of God, entertain a pious prejudice against persons who differ from them in faith. I think I was able to afford some valuable assistance to this young student.

CONVOCAATION

TO HIS FATHER

8 Dec. 1912

. . . Norah and I went to the Convocation of the University on Saturday. The Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, as Chancellor, presided and presented the degrees. The Vice-Chancellor, head of a Christian college here, presented the Chancellor with the degree of Doctor of Oriental Learning. The Chancellor knows several Eastern languages and has been about a good deal, but learned is not precisely the word for him. It was a public benefit, however, to confer the degree, for the Chancellor left the hall for a few moments and returned covered all over in a gorgeous red silk robe. When he took his place again in the State chair upon the dais, he became the glowing centre of a rather gorgeous picture. Round him were British officers in uniform, Fellows of the University and Heads of colleges in academic gowns, with hoods of all hues; and the floor (we looked down from a side balcony) was covered with graduates and undergraduates wearing various-coloured hoods, white turbans—and black academic gowns.

What is going to happen to the East? Everywhere—in China, Japan, India—the East is adopting European institutions, parliaments and factories. Our University is a case in point. It is so European,

that even the little European mediævalisms of caps and gowns are introduced into it. But is what is natural for Europe good for Asia? Won't there be a reaction some day after irretrievable damage has been done? There is no knowing. I feel that I am in the midst of a world I do not understand. English politics and European imbroglios are simplicity itself compared with what is going on out here. Consider that English has become the language of education, law, business, and culture; that every student, fresh from the isolated surroundings of his village, steeps his brain in European ideas gathered from his university text-books. Is the Punjab to give up its own character and become a sort of imitation of the West, with not even a language of its own—a foreign law, a foreign trade system, and so on? The negroes in the States have abandoned their own tongues to speak English, but has it been good for them? India will never abandon her own tongues, but she may get so varnished with Europeanisms as to be neither herself nor anybody else.

SUFFRAGETTES AND PILLAR-BOXES

*To WILFRID**15 Dec. 1912*

. . . We appreciate your sending us first-hand reports about Edith. Glad the pair of them are doing so well. As for co-partnership, I don't quite know what it means—don't send a treatise on the subject!—but I can't imagine any Englishman putting up with any kind of partnership save his wife's in his domesticities. Flats are bad enough and so are villas with irritation caused by neighbours. As I say I don't know what co-partnership means; but if it brings one nearer one's neighbours, Lord love you, it's not for me!

You should have heard me swear when I read of the suffragette outrages on London pillar-boxes. I at once saw a letter from you in the flames. This, I cried, is not playing the game! It is the first time I have been so worked up by any of the women's doings.

Examinations and examination papers have been my fare for the last week. I sit in state on the long upper front balcony of the College, with three long rows of poor scribbling devils in front of me. I never felt more disgusted with exams in my life. Why are these youths cramming and scribbling? Couldn't they find something better to do? A degree for them means higher-paid appointments: which is impor-

tant. But the drudgery and cramming which are the lot of all save the most brilliant are a big set-off against the comparative delightfulness of student life for these youngsters. And they are cramming up English books to pass an exam in English, and have to get English ideas into their brains, which, if not smaller brains, are at any rate far less initiated brains, than brains of University students in England. It is doubtful if Western culture gets deeper than the skin. It's a great responsibility for England to make India like itself. Why can't India be herself, and save the monotony and bother?

THE CASE MARKED RELIGION

To WILFRID

23 Dec. 1912

. . . I have just bought Vol. I of *Cicero's Letters to Atticus* in the Loeb Edition, with the Latin text facing an English translation on the opposite page. It is tough reading though I enjoy the crisp Latin. I read the letters with an eye to phrases as if I had still to write proses for a fantastical little tutor I knew at Oxford. How ever I got through Mods passes my comprehension.

Several hours have been spent this vacation in rearranging the College Library. Whenever I come upon a book that is peculiarly rubbishy, yet which I know the Trustees will not have the heart to destroy, I stuff it into the case marked "Religion," where there is already a fine collection of nonsense. Every religion in India—which is as much as to say: in the whole world—raises its voice there in full scream against every other. It was with secret delight that I stuck into the midst of them Priestly's *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*. Most of the books which formed the original library were bequeathed by the old Sirdar Dyal Singh, and a queer collection they were; from guide-books to Paris, to sermons by the obscurest of evangelical divines.

WORLD UPSIDE DOWN

TO HIS FATHER

LAHORE,

5 *Jan.* 1913

. . . There goes another log on the fire. The paradox is that I need a fire in the study, while Norah sits in comfortable warmth on the verandah. A student is translating to her a play he has written in a vernacular. In India they do just the opposite of what is done in England. In India, for instance, when it is cold people go out of doors; but in England you go into the house. In India, for a man to take off his head-covering when paying calls would indicate easy and careless manners. It is more formal and polite to keep it on. So you see, when one gets to the other side of the world, one does find it (as I always thought when I read my school books) upside down.

Yes, Christians are few in number compared with the other religious people. The number of persons who must have gone to hell, for being ignorant of the true religion, in the old days must have been enormous. I am often at a loss to understand why different religions should despise each other when they are so much alike. Take the Mohamedans and the Sikhs, for instance: hating each other like poison on account of a long history of reciprocal persecutions, not so far back in time. The Mo-

hamedans are pure Unitarians, and so are the Sikhs; but the Moslems have but one prophet, whereas the Sikhs have ten *gurus*.¹ Why can't they pool their religion? The truth is, that religion—that supposed-to-be civilizing influence—is the least civilizing part of man. The Jews, again, are Unitarians; but what would Jews think of Mohamedans and Sikhs? And what would M's and S's think of Jews?

¹ A *guru* is a Spiritual Teacher.

A GLASS HOUSE OF RESPECTABILITY

To WILFRID

23 March 1913

. . . The world seems to me a very interesting and absorbing world with its ecstasies of joy and pain, its sins and its righteousness, its prudence and its adventures. I am wondering if I will go on as a Professor, living in a glass house of respectability entirely foreign to me, or whether it wouldn't be bolder, and therefore wiser, to leave here at the end of the third year for America, to farm as an honest man. . . . I do not choose perilous adventures: I am getting old—by God—nearly 40! A sharpened sense of humour, a sharpened mind, along with other signs of the adult I perceive about me. I should rather like to appear as I am at some time before I die. Not a respecter of conventions; not an undoubting believer in universities, pulpits, and other machinery. A fool—like all, or nearly all: a fellow whose practice does not square with the codes: "a man who Fortune's buffets and rewards has ta'en with equal thanks." At present I am too much bent on comfort and easy-going, and the reputation that leads to emolument. And yet I don't see myself an American without some compunction from behind. These speculations are not for the old folk.

"BEAUTIFUL SOULS!"

TO HIS MOTHER

6 April 1913

. . . The play is the topic for this week. Some scenes from *The Merchant of Venice*. Crowded audience, including professors from other colleges and several Indian big-wigs. Before the actors appeared, came Norah across the stage instructing the man with the lights. A fine prologue I thought. The acting was good, particularly the row—sometimes angry, sometimes merry—made by the crowd in the trial scene. Our youngest charge, Kewal,¹ took part in the crowd, and laughed in an utterly charming manner which caught the audience like a contagion. After the play, the Principal, Norah, and myself appeared before the curtain. We sat down on chairs placed for us, on the Principal's either hand. The actors in their costumes ranged themselves in a standing semicircle behind us. The Principal rose and cast round Norah's neck a heavy garland of flowers. The audience vibrated with cheers, and Norah sat erect and goddess-like. I felt like a god. Then the Principal made a speech in which he talked about the wonderful qualities of Norah (and me) dubbing us "beautiful souls." I felt more like a god than ever. He enlarged upon the union between the East and the West, and called

¹ Two Indian boys were living with them, being coached.

Norah "The Mother of the College." Then he produced a little blue silk casket and handed it to Norah, containing the sum of 125 rupees as a slight testimonial of the feelings of the College Trustees.

I had to return thanks for Norah. I said that she was too modest to make a speech, but I was not (laughter). Norah had not done the plays for money. Of course we should not weep when we got home with it. But neither were they to look upon Norah as inspired by the most disinterested, the noblest, the most unselfish motives. She had not done the plays out of love for the college. (The Principal had conveyed this impression.) I did not deny that Norah loved the College. I would ask her what her sentiments towards the College were when I got home. No, she had done the plays out of her love—her passion—for the Drama; and to this passion she remorselessly sacrificed as many persons as she could—the students, for instance, who had been rehearsing for six weeks under the severest discipline. Look at them, meekly drawn up in their semicircle, clothed in the most fantastic garments. Victims all! I was another victim! For was I not Norah's Business Manager? That was the name she gave to my grief and suffering. The Principal, himself, was a victim; and there were others. She sacrificed them all to her passion, and then got the reputation for self-sacrifice! Indirectly, no doubt, she did some good because the Drama was a fine thing. Philosophers have been known to say that the

best work of man was Tragedy, such as that of the Greeks, or of Shakespeare. Then I said Thank you for the money, which would be doubled in amount by the perfectly wise way in which we should spend it. But more than the money, Norah, I was sure, had enjoyed the cheers with which she had been greeted; cheers such as she had not heard since she left the stage she had trodden as an actress; since, in fact, she had married, and had only *me* to applaud her.

Between every sentence of this speech insert the word "laughter," and then add that at the close Norah got up and presented a purse with a sovereign in it to a student who had won the prize she offered for the best one-act play representing Indian life.

RAMSAY MACDONALD

To WILFRID

20 April 1913

. . . The members of the Royal Commission upon the Indian Civil Service have been visiting Lahore and holding their enquiry. The court was open, but with my usual lack of curiosity I didn't go near. I went to hear one of the Commissioners, however, give an address to the students of the Forman Christian College—Ramsay MacDonald, Labour Party man. The college has an American foundation, and is presided over by a missionary who keeps a carriage, has electric light and electric fans in his house, and suffers other hardships for the gospel.

Ramsay MacDonald gave a sensible and vigorous address, informing the students—among whom there must be a fair sprinkling of the temper the Government regards as seditious—that they should aim at being Punjabis, not at turning into Englishmen. But on the other hand the West had a lot to teach the East (he said this as if he knew it, not in the usual canting tone), and if these youngsters wanted to help their country their way was plain: Let them go to the villages as elementary school teachers, upon whatever pay, and carry to the school children the knowledge they themselves set such a value upon.

The Principal of the college applauded heartily in spite of his carriage and his electric fans; and so

did I, in spite of the fact that I would have a carriage and electric fans if I saw the way to them.

At the close of the address the Principal moved about among the people in the front seats and came up to me also, with the invitation to take tea upon the college lawn. I repaired to this spot surrounded by lime-trees and orange-trees, and the pomegranate with its scarlet bloom—and there stood Ramsay MacDonald, and up to him went I and told him I was a Socialist, the effect of which was a quarter of an hour's cordial conversation. He has obviously been carved out of Aberdeen granite, and there is a tremendous energy about him—one of the workers of that ant-tribe, mankind.

FEVER

To HIS MOTHER

12 Oct. 1913

. . . Did I tell you in my last I was made Superintendent of Hostels? I have more than 300 students to rule, besides cooks and servants. . . .

The following are some of the first experiences of the new Superintendent:—

1. The Medical Officer arranges to see me tomorrow: I wait for him: an hour after his time I get a note to say his carriage has met with an accident, and he cannot hire a tonga; and therefore, he cannot come.

Later, students being down with fever, I send for him. He writes that he has fever and cannot come. I wait four days. Send for him again. He has "not quite shaken off" the fever—is writing to a friend to come in his place. The friend has fever, temperature 104° , can't come. I instruct the students therefore to engage and pay for their own doctor.

2. A fence has to be repaired. Man does not turn up. Why? Has fever.

3. I want a large number of masons to build Norah's theatre. I may not be able to get them, I am told. Why not? Fever! The Head Clerk can do no work to-day. Fever!

4. Student enters: "Sir, a snake comes into my

room at night through a hole in the wall, and I want the hole blocked up."

"Have you seen the snake?"

"No, sir. I have not lived in the room yet (!). But I was bitten by a scorpion on both legs when living outside the college, and I am afraid."

I suggest that he block up the hole himself with two bricks which I give him, and so save my writing to the Principal, who would write to the landlord, who would keep us waiting for the answer.

5. Enter a student with a long petition: "Our kitchen smokes for want of ventilation. Cook threatens to leave; students are getting sore eyes, might go blind, might have to see a doctor which would mean expense to the College. More economical to provide ventilation at once."

"Why aren't you content to say the smoke is a nuisance?"

Meanwhile, thanks to bad management, 50 students are still being crowded in among their fellows, and scarcely any of them are in their right place. They are complaining that no study can be done. Four days ago, the landlord of a new house we have taken was asked to have it swept to make it habitable. It was not swept this morning. I go and see a friend of the landlord who is left in charge while he himself is away: ask to have sweeping done at once. "The *munshi* (clerk) is not here—when he comes I will ask him to have it done."

Later.—Went out again at 2 p.m. in blazing sun to see if the house had been swept. Nothing attempted. Returned to College, got hold of Head Clerk, instructed him to find sweepers and *bhishti* with waterskin and call for me and escort all to the house. Clerk arrives in the teeth of a duststorm; notwithstanding, we march half a mile to the house and have the men set to work. Result: A house I can send students into to-morrow, but the Head Clerk again laid up with fever.¹

¹ The next day he himself was down with fever.—Ed.

HIS CEMETERY!

TO HIS MOTHER

19 Oct., I believe

. . . Hostels continue to be the principal preoccupation of my mind. I believe to-day I have gained possession of the last necessary rooms. Students have been coming to the verandah all the morning to ask me for the new rooms, and been transfixed by a notice I have pasted on a pillar: *On Sundays the Superintendent declines to see students except in cases of illness.* I had to go out to two, however, who were without beds and tables and stools and boxes. Then I have a lot of foolish complaints and entreaties. For instance, a student writes: "I beg to state that the conduct of the *halwai* (sweetmeat-seller) of our hostels has grown unbearable. Only a few days ago I went to his shop and demanded certain articles of food from him. He did not listen to me. . . . I waited, and repeated my demands, but he did not care and went on serving other students. I asked him the reason. It was paltry, jocose, and insulting. I scolded him by way of correction for the future." He asks me to fine the *halwai* and not listen to any explanation he may have to offer! In this matter I have, needless to say, done nothing.

Another student writes that the roof of his room is falling in upon him and threatens to become his cemetery!

Meanwhile Norah's theatre is a-building behind the College, and rehearsals are going on, and costumes are being made and dyed, and a committee is to meet to-day to discuss the business side of the undertaking; and soon there will be the stage curtains to make, the scenery, and soldiers' armour. The play is *Coriolanus*. It's a busy world!

You can tell your Mothers' Meeting that I am teaching Tennyson to certain students for English honours, and am puzzled very much to understand why Tennyson is regarded as a great poet. A few songs are the best of him, and a few pieces like *The Lady of Shalott*. *Enoch Arden* ought never to have been written, and I have misgivings about Arthur and his Round Table, whom I am to study very soon. *The Princess* is a very poor thing—the songs the best part of it. A few songs and ballads are probably all of Tennyson—and a few descriptions of landscape—which will see 1914. And all this because he is a timid conservative, and unable to think. Therefore tell your Mothers not to be conservative, and not to be afraid of thought. Think how many changes are going on to-day, and of all the changes none is being helped by Alfred T. *In Memoriam*, by the way, is morbid and a huge bore—a kind of inflammation of sorrow; as King Arthur is an inflammation of the spiritual wound of respectability.

DEATH OF GOPAL

2 Nov. 1913

. . . Edith remembered Norah's birthday. "Norah, when is Edith's birthday?" "I don't know." Poor little Mumbles carefully explains that the reason for her long neglect of writing to me was not that she was offended with me, but that she was living with a Rubens cherub. I laugh to read this! I never thought she was offended. But I thought that to ask such a thing was a likely way of getting a letter. And I knew all the time that the baby was keeping her busy. *I* was offended—with the baby!

Gopal, our best hostel *chaprassi* has died. He had fever—was recovering—exposed himself—temperature shot up to 107°—brain fever—friends crowded his room—refused a qualified doctor—called in a vaid, and at 4 a.m. this morning the man was dead, and the day before I had given him a month's leave to go away and get married. There are many ways of dying for one's principles, and one may even have to die for the principles of one's friends. The dead man alone knew the contents of our many storerooms; and he alone knew the students well enough to be able to distribute their letters to them personally.

Funny scraps of paper these—don't you think? They ought to suggest ideas, but they don't. . . .

Norah was complaining that a bit of skin on one

of her fingers was puckered. Said I: Every bit of you is *pukka*, isn't it? Now *pukka* in India is the word for quite all right, first-class, and so on. So I reckon here was a very pretty pun.

Note.—Between this and the former letter he had been down with a second and very severe attack of fever, lasting for seven days. The above letter was written with difficulty, and he was proud of having struggled through with it. He did not want his Home people to know how ill he had been—in fact, that he had been ill at all. The next letter, dated 9 Nov., began: “Norah has just said I am looking very well. I suppose it is the glorious weather.”—ED.

1914

HIS AEROPLANE SOUL

18 May 1914

. . . Your letter of birthday greeting and handsome present inflate my aeroplane soul. That's a new sort of soul invented in the twentieth century—very cheap. It's rather flighty. Formerly I had a pneumatic tyre soul, so I consider my present one an improvement. It is less liable to deflation but more liable to fatal accident! Whatever set me on talking this nonsense about the soul? Have you ever observed that men who talk about the soul invariably talk nonsense?

The best part of your letter was the sudden transportation from Exeter to London. On one page I was in the garden with the lilac—sweeter than anything in India: on the very next page you took me with you to the little house at Hendon. . . .

We went out to dinner last night, and came home again in due time. Remarkable event. We went and we came. This is the story of a dinner-party.

THEIR TINY FEET

24 May 1914

. . . The temperature under the punkah registers 88°, and only by great self-restraint avoids reaching 90°. Yesterday morning, returning from College at about 9, I discovered Norah sewing on the back verandah, the only cool place at that hour, with the bearer fanning her. Oriental luxury! Transformation of a simple village lass (you never saw her in the character) into a memsaheb. . . .

There is a great secret between Mr. Martin and ourselves. I am likely in September next to receive an invitation to join the Islamia College here. . . . We are on the knees of the gods, which is an adventurous but fortunate position—as we know; for we have been there before.

This writing-table of mine is overrun with tiny ants who have a nest somewhere in the roof, and a Jacob's ladder staircase leads to it up the white-washed wall. Their tiny feet beat a faint track upon the whitewash.

BHIM TAL

To A. R. ANDREAE

BHIM TAL, UNITED PROVINCES,

30 June 1914

DEAR TEUTON,

Your last letter was written partly on a Solent steamer, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Calshot Castle, which I often used to gaze upon when a boy. Perhaps you were sitting in the very seat upon the identical steamer—for I knew and adventured upon all those boats—but this is carrying conjecture too far. It was a jewel of a letter, and I merely remark upon the situation you were in when you wrote it in order to lug in a description of the situation I am in while I write this. We are not quite 5,000 feet in air upon a Himalayan slope, for the usual hot-weather vacation. *Tal* means lake, and there is one below us; of no great size, but full of fish. The immediate prospect commanded from our verandah is a wide green valley enclosed by mountain slopes in many ridges covered with forests. At the moment it is raining with all the power of the monsoon, and there is a deafening noise upon our iron roof. The clouds arranged their assembly to-day just as we were having tea upon the verandah. Frowns gathered on the mountains in striking contrast to the pale light in the green valley below; the forests were crowned with mists

that sailed in air and dragged ragged edges; flashes of vivid lightning preceded echoing peals of thunder. When the rain came, every corrugation in our roof poured down its own spout of water; and there we sat on the verandah in a storm within a storm, enjoying delightful coolness after the trying days and nights of Lahore.

We arrived at Bhim Tal after a 24 hours' railway journey to Kathgodam, and a pony ride uphill of eight miles; whereon befell us a perilous adventure. Norah was ahead on her pony just where the precipice was most dangerous, and I was behind on mine, when down from the rocks above us and between us hurled a cataract of large stones, making my pony shy, nearly unseating me. I shouted angrily: *Sabar karo*, which I am proud to boast is very good Urdu for *Wait a minute*—thinking some dunder-headed fools of quarrymen were going about their work carelessly. Norah burst into merry laughter, for the quarrymen were mischievous brown monkeys, and quite unacquainted (like you are) with Urdu.

It pleases me to trace a resemblance between these brown monkeys and my friends. One had the pinkest of backsides which he exhibited at me as if he understood the force of adding insult to injury. With so many missionary societies in the world, I marvel that no effort has even been made to reform the brown monkey. I think a beginning might well be made—before our return journey—at Bhim Tal.

Our first bit of intercourse with the society of the place was this which I have mentioned. Our next was a visit from the Church of England padre, and not to be outdone in politeness we returned his visit by going to Evensong the very next Sunday. The church was half full of Tommies in khaki from the malaria camp pitched in the valley. The service began with its time-honoured phrases, but now and then a sentimental inflection in the voice of the padre came near to vulgarizing them. By and by we got on to the Psalms, and Tommy's tongue was stumbling over Og, King of Bashan (which he pronounced *basin*), and praising the Lord for having drowned the Egyptians in the Red Sea, "for his mercy endureth for ever." Likewise he took away their land from some other people—for the same reason. We wound up with "Blessed is he who shall take thy little ones and dash them against the stones." Then we sang a hymn—each verse praising love, and ending with "Therefore give us love." The Tommies sang it with unflinching solemnity, but I rather questioned whether the passion would be good for them. Then the preacher got up and remarked that the next day was St. Peter's Day, and while we kept the anniversary in mind we must remember that our worship must be paid not to St. Peter, but to God. Having made what he considered to be a point, the preacher impressively resumed his seat.

Well—this is the second religious service we have

attended during the last blessed three years. Out here, on the ramparts of Empire, I look at these matters from a novel point of view. I see the British governing by the force of their power to govern, and when I approach the recognized explanation of this power—the official religion of the rulers—I find a lot of Jewish old clothes, a silly and sentimental hymn, and a weak-minded parson. The Tommies in the pews were stolid fellows, evidently capable of keeping their nerve though they were put up to fight an airship, and I was sorry that so poor and ill-sustaining fare was put before them. There is no nonsense about love in the camp, I'll bet. Football is a healthier pastime. But imagine one of these men attempting to be religious, and getting put off the contradictory account of the mercy of the Lord—and by a hundred Jewish anachronisms which only a scholar can get the hang of. I should think he would decide that there was more virtue in his freest companion. Voluntary worship is pure sham. And who wants to worship Peter?

No, the English are a rude and vigorous people with rude and vigorous virtues, but they are not brainy. Hence it comes about that they have accepted for so long such a peculiar explanation to themselves of the sources of their strength. But fancy trying to reform the Church Service Book and the accepted ways! We have no religion except our character; and in the wide world there is no feasible

religion: so one form is as good as another. Hard lines on the Church that is bound to recede farther and farther. I am a child of the Age, for I believe in the present, since it alone leads to a fuller future.

I have just done a beastly act of death on a beetle. Why was he buzzing in the air and courting self-destruction in the flame of my lamp? There are spiders here as wide in the spread of their legs as the saucer of a teacup. The last we executed had two bodies. They die small. We've seen snakes, but putting them to death is another matter. I am bold only to harmless insects. The frogs make night melodious; and the fireflies, lighting up recesses amid the trees, surround us with fairy-land. Norah took a firefly in her hand, and it was like a lamp lighted in a shrine.

Give my inexpressible love to all and yourself.

DICK

GIVE ME LEISURE!

To HIS MOTHER

BHIM TAL,

1 July 1914

. . . If I were departing to a new world and could claim one boon of the gods, I should probably say: *Give me leisure*. I wonder the Prayer Book is not re-edited for the sake of this request. In case of misunderstanding, I should be careful to explain to the gods that I did not mean unemployment. No; give me the ease of a college professor enjoying his vacation in noblest surroundings, upon full monthly pay!

School, strangely enough, in Greek means *ease*, leisure. Leisure has certainly been my best school. The jelly-fishes need a calm sea in which to expand unrumpled their coloured discs and their graceful hanging tracteries—and their sting! I am something like a jelly-fish.

BERNARD SHAW ON THE WAR

LAHORE,

15 Dec. 1914

. . . I agree with Arnold Bennett's account of Bernard Shaw. The courage of the manifesto is amazing, and the wisdom of the greater part of it is very rare—I mean it is such wisdom as few men possess. The first section about the cause of the war is perversely influenced, however, by Shaw's hatred of self-righteousness. We have talked of German wickedness and our own goodness too long for the self-containment of this Irishman. I hope the Press will be wise enough to distinguish the valuable from the useless parts of the manifesto, and try to get national recognition of its real common sense. Such libels as James Douglas's article about "cynical sophistry" are mere ignorance and spite.

I have resigned the professorship at the Dyal Singh College as from Feb. 1st next. . . .

1915

TO HIS FATHER

ISLAMIA COLLEGE, LAHORE
(written in the Examination Hall),

1 Feb. 1915

. . . Here I am in the new college—first day. A large hall with marble floor, filled with desks at which sit about 300 students, in red fezes and black frock-coats, all diligently scribbling at an exam. The day of my arrival lands me in for three hours' attendance as a supervisor. . . .

The students of the Dyal Singh College held two meetings to bid us farewell (one for Norah) and the professors held a third. On the morning of Thursday last, in Norah's theatre, the College assembled, and a lot of speeches were made and poems read by students and professors—all in my honour; after which an address was read and presented to me. We had previously both been garlanded.

One student called me a "beloved, eloquent, and post-erudite professor!" A poet declared that everybody else in the College was a minor, I only had come to full age! The same poem seemed to compare me with Bacon, Addison, and Lamb—to the latter's disadvantage. Another student said "he knows a hundred dodges for winning the affection of his students and has the gift of the gab"—imagining both these phrases to be complimen-

tary! Another—"Before I begin, may I ask you one question—what this worldly life consists of?" The speaker himself then answered it, "It consists of ups and downs, meetings and partings, etc."

In the afternoon a meeting was held in Norah's honour. As before, there were garlands, speeches, poems, and an address—along with a dress length of Punjabi shot silk, all azure, and fire, and copper. I forgot to say they gave me a fountain-pen and a walking-stick. The professors invited us to an elaborate tea of English cakes and Indian sweetmeats, fruit, sugar-cane; and finally to tennis.

We leave the Dyal Singh College with deep regrets; the compensations being that Norah has better domestic conditions; and I, the best Principal in Lahore.

CONTRASTS

To HIS MOTHER

BRANDRETH ROAD,
28 Feb. 1915

. . . Norah has been entertaining forty students—her old Dramatic Society—upon the roof, where they made noise enough to shake down the stars. . . .

. . . (*à propos* of Self-government). . . . Firm and impartial administration is possible only to exceptions among Indians. But I don't like to write such things in letters. I prefer to talk them out, upon occasions, when all the qualifying clauses can be put in.

You sometimes hear outcries at Home about the the suppression of Indian newspapers. If you lived out here you would marvel at the patience and long tolerance of the Government.

I had a walk in the bazaars to-day, hunting for one thing quite uselessly—darning wool. I suppose nobody darns stockings out here. *En passant* I saw an Indian lady get out of a tonga. She had full crimson trousers, a purple tunic embroidered all over with gold, and a scarlet veil over all—including her head. The effect was gorgeous. Soon after I was struck by the very bad taste of a fashionable English-woman, who resembled a chess-board nearly cut in two.

What a gossip I am. A lady said to me the other

day in her own drawing-room: "Really, Professor Richards, you are improving; you are quite witty." I did not respond that to be praised thus was very humiliating. Soon after, when I was becoming really interested in what her husband was saying, the lady commanded him not to talk politics. Now it was to hear her husband talk politics that I had favoured the lady with a call. Politics being made contraband, however, I made my best submarine bow, put my periscope upon my head, and hailed a passing Dreadnought. I have tried to keep the war out of this letter, but it seems to have made its way in, in spite of me.

OUR LITTLE WORLD

To MABEL HARRISON¹

28 March 1915

. . . You are a very good girl to write; though I suppose I ought now to call you a "young lady." No—not until I am an old man, which fate may the gods long avert. We enjoyed your letter, so full of Walsall news. I don't suppose my wife will answer it. She never answers letters. She seldom even answers me. And yet she is not deaf, only heartless; or if not without a heart she is without a stamp, or some such trivial pretext. So I am writing.

We have moved into our new college and new house. The new college is purely Mohamedan; not a mixture of all sorts, like the last. Our little world, just now, is 'a Mohamedan world, and so we all wondered what it would do when war broke out with Turkey. The Mohamedans have an interesting custom called *Jihad*—or Sacred War. When you are engaged in a *jihad* it is a religious act, sure of heavenly reward, to kill a Christian. Now Norah and I are Christians, or supposed to be, and the Kaiser persuaded the Sultan to declare a *jihad*, hoping that the Mohamedans here would join in, and my wife and I be murdered. We have not been murdered up to the present, but the Kaiser still

¹ A member of his congregation at Walsall; a schoolgirl when he left England.

has his hopes. Among the many wicked things which he has done it will not be forgotten that he tried to abet the sword of fanaticism in Asia, and get valuable people killed for the sake of a religion in which he does not believe.

He nearly made me join the volunteers; but I remembered, in time, that in this hot country I could not possibly carry my rifle myself; and I could not afford to pay a coolie to carry it for me, even if it were allowed, which is doubtful. Moreover, the coolie might be asleep, under a palm-tree or in a basket, just when I wanted him.

We have electric light in our new house, and electric fans. I don't know why I tell you this, unless it is to make you sorry you have no fans in your house. But that is a reason why you should be glad.

The hot weather has come with a bound this year. Yesterday afternoon it was 82°, in the coolest place, and made us feel as joyful as if we had been to three Sunday School Treats.

Mosquitoes and sandflies are biting us. Can't you hear our screams? The air along all the roads is filled with dust, and the dust is filled with glorious fire from the sun. Don't come to India: or if you do, bring with you a bottle of lemonade—no; not for you, for *me* to drink. A red plague rid you! This last quotation (from Shakespeare) is addressed not to you, but to the Kaiser, in case one of his sub-

marines captures and reads this letter. A murrain on you! (I am still engaged in conversation with the Imperial War Lord). But fair befall the fortune of my affectionate Mabel—no; I mean I am hers affectionately,

P. E. RICHARDS

APRIL FOOL!

TO HIS FATHER

BRANDRETH ROAD,

2 April 1915

. . . Yesterday was April the 1st, and some first-year students thought they would celebrate the occasion with my assistance—having heard it was some sort of a gawdy day in England. When I approached the classroom I was bolted out, so I went on past the windows over the playground towards the library. They saw me through the windows and dead silence fell upon the noisy class. The doors were immediately opened, and a swarm came after me. "Sir, it is your period with us!" "Why are you not in your classroom?" I said, pretending entire ignorance. "Why are you here, like a swarm of bees?" They didn't know whether I was joking or not. I returned with them, but a handful of students, left in the room, bolted the doors when we arrived. They were, however, opened in two seconds. I began to read the roll. A fat fellow left the back bench and seated himself upon my platform, a privilege reserved for deaf or stupid students. He might be either. He began to wriggle about on the platform to such an extent that I could hardly write the roll. "If you enjoy the hospitality of this platform," said I, "you must sit still." Then the whole class began to cough, and then the

fellow on the platform began to cough and to shake about. I laid my hand on his shoulder. "You are too ill to stop in the class; go out." He retired, and resuming my chair I touched the table. It lurched forward off the platform on to the front benches, and my book flew. I was very angry and said I understood why Inayat Ali had been shaking about and I would see him fined for it. Dead silence in the class: all coughs stopped simultaneously, and we were meek as mice till the end.

The Principal proposes to fine the whole class two annas each. Three years ago when Charles Lamb's *Essays* were prescribed for reading, the essay on All Fools' Day set the imagination of the whole college to work; and on April 1st every classroom was bolted. The whole college was fined. This sort of thing has to be kept down. The hot weather no doubt affected my temper yesterday, and chilled (save the mark!) my sense of humour. I am grown up now, and my sympathies have been transferred to the old fellows away from the boys.

THE CIRCULAR ROAD

To HIS MOTHER

BRANDRETH ROAD,

24 Nov. 1915

. . . It is a wonderful thing to walk on the Circular Road round the city in the early mornings now. The air is slightly misty, and in the gardens deep-toned mango-trees stand on the light green lawns; and throngs of people pass by in gay and picturesque costumes. The city houses with their flat roofs rising one above the other against the pale blue sky are enchanted, like the mango-trees, in the misty morning air. A little later in the day women and girls bathe in a stream running through the gardens. No towels are used. One's dress is slipped over one's wet shoulders, or wound about one's wet body—and there you are. All sorts of beggars line the walks: this one with a twisted leg; that, a withered arm; here a sore; there, blindness. If you were to give to every one you might soon be begging yourself. A woman, as poor as Poverty, drags about an old man in a wooden go-cart—and the old man is all bones. Another beggar passes by our house every day, on all fours. Some simply lie in the dust, covered with hair and filthy rags—and moan. Two or three city gates you will pass in your morning's walk, meeting a throng of pedestrians, ponies, cows, buffaloes; and there

will be much buying going on at the tiny shops in the bazaars.

A number of women, in dresses of pale colours, descend the stairs of a Hindu temple, their children in their arms. They are a pillar, or a cloud, or a waterfall of pale harmonious colour—and a bell is clanging in the temple.

1916

RANIKOT

To HIS FATHER

3 Nov. 1916

. . . We are leaving this house on Dec. 1, and our new address will be Ranikot Road, Lahore. *Ranikot* means *Queen's House*. I have just been looking at some of the cracks in this house again. The foundations are so shallow that the place shakes whenever a tonga goes along the road. They are still at night, but when the first tonga comes along in the early morning the house gives a jump, and I don't think it stops vibrating all day. We are simply betting there won't be a more than usually severe earthquake before Dec. 1. . . .

Norah has not yet quite recovered from the frightful overwork of her play. She will write—I don't know when; for in a fortnight or so we are moving.

Love to you both—and Wilx.

WILFRID MISSING

To HIS MOTHER

RANIKOT ROAD, LAHORE,

24 Dec. 1916

. . . I am thinking of little else but Wilx. Your last letter brought me the sergeant's story. . . . The reference to Wilfrid's distress at the loss of his comrade is very moving. Look at the translation of Homer's *Iliad*, XIX, 228-229: where Ulysses says to Achilles, who is inconsolable for the death of his friend, that a soldier must bury his comrade with a pitiless heart, and that in war a day's mourning is all that can be spared for slain men. . . .

We have blue sky, a white frost, mist, and pale sunshine poured upon everything in the early mornings. I never saw a more beautiful or glittering landscape than the open fields present just beyond our bungalow. About a quarter of a mile up the road is a grove of orange-trees—dark green leaves and their branches hung with golden spheres like lamps. I thought, when I saw it this morning, how Wilx would enjoy the sight.

You write bravely. The state of war in which we are at present is the common state of the world, and such wounds as we are suffering are the common human experience. . . . The history of Wilfrid is the history of all: and the grief we feel is a very common thing. Life confesses that it is unable to

go forward without loss of life. What the meaning of it all is I confess I cannot see; but Wilfrid is ennobled in the last glimpse we have of him—mourning for his friend. He has bequeathed a tale to his family: none of us perhaps will do so well.

1917

To HIS MOTHER

RANIKOT ROAD,

1 Jan. 1917

. . . Our new house is beginning to look very cosy, but the war and events make us feel sinful in enjoying it. Every time I tuck up warm in bed I think of the cold of the trenches. Every time I see Norah pouring tea into dainty china, I marvel at the inequality of men's lots. Then there's the carriage. . . . All this seems to me less valuable because I can't tell Wilx about it, and rather wicked because the young fellows are in the firing-line.

. . . A huge debt is owing to men who will endure bravely the sort of hell that modern warfare is. "Good and faithful"—rather! And not less those who bear anxiety and endure the torture of knowing that other people are suffering. In every one of us there is something divine that puts on flesh and endures a thousand ills, and deserves its reward for its heroic deed in becoming human. The pains of life are certain and the rewards so elusive and hard to win. . . . Perhaps in your beautiful grave time of life you are discovering wells of wisdom which I have to march over many leagues of sandy desert to find.

A MISERABLE THOUSAND RUPEES

RANIKOT ROAD,

29 April 1917

. . . For the sake of saving a miserable thousand rupees this year I have allowed Norah to go away to Dalhousie, and thus lose six weeks of this house which she has made so delightful, and this garden which was a desert and is now blossoming like the rose—all her work. It was prudent to save the expenses of a holiday by taking the young prince,¹ but oh, these empty rooms and solitary meals! I am not entirely alone since I have Jai Dayal—one of our nicest students—with me, to talk to the servants for me, see the pony fed, and be generally companionable. . . . In the heat when we had no carriage, of course we thought how nice it would be to have one and take the air in the evening. Now we have one, Norah is not here to enjoy it. Still she escapes the heats which ought to reconcile me to her absence.

¹ A child of seven years, from Central India—spoken of in these collected letters as “Krishna.”

A BIRTHDAY LETTER

To HIS FATHER¹

LAHORE,

18 June 1917

. . . Your birthday approaches and I cannot let it pass without a greeting; although your birthday brings me nowadays as much pain as pleasure. It is a reminder of how time flies, and how life runs away. Since we have lost Wilx, I have been more inclined to catch at anything human that belongs to me, and say: Stay! And here you insist on having a birthday to show that another year has passed.

I am off to Dalhousie in two days. . . . I shall see mountains while you are looking at Heavitree garden. . . . A small garden in Heavitree—just the sight of it—would be as good to me as the sight of a whole province of mountains—with you and the Madre sitting in it.

Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis is a Latin verse: Time changes and we change with it. The old country has changed enormously, as I gather from the newspapers, in the last few years. Even in my little home, in a corner near Exeter, there have been changes. Have I changed too?

Not in heart, anyway; not in response to your birthday; not in the warmth with which I am

Your affectionate son.

* His Father had died on May 29.

PRINCE KRISHNA

To HIS MOTHER

WYKE, DALHOUSIE,

9 July 1917

. . . Monsoon rains are pouring heavily on our roof. Clouds are wandering through the dripping forests, and blowing in at open doors and windows. . . .

We have a small garden here, in terraces, descending the hillside. We have apricot-trees, dahlias in full bloom, and roses. Below the terraces, on a grassy platform good for chairs, is a walnut-tree to which is tied a swing for our little Prince Krishna. He dashes out of rooms and about the garden with a roar. He has lately taken to roaring at his pony—a very successful trick—which frightens the pony so much that it nearly falls over the precipice. Kishen laughs! . . . But he is a very sweet-natured intelligent child all the same.

ONLY REAL CAUSE OF GRIEF

WYKE, DALHOUSIE,

11 July 1917

. . . Yesterday I posted a letter to you and to Father—and when I got home again—there was your letter. . . . Perhaps another, which went down in the *Mongolia*, would have warned us that the end was so near. . . .

I hope you are not grieving too much. It must be well with him; our only real cause of grief is ourselves. . . . He gave to his children to his utmost, and allowed us opportunities for which we can never be too grateful. . . .

I hope you are now able to sleep; and I hope you are feeling some of the healing touch of time. It can never take away from you the best part of your sorrow. You have suffered much in the space of a year. Edith and I share your trouble with you. Thank God, that what we have lost was so precious.

With love from us both, dear Mother.

WISDOM OR SELFISHNESS?

DALHOUSIE,

4 August 1917

. . . To-day brings me your account of Father's last moments. Last mail told me of your looking through Wilfrid's things. My answer to that was simply an account of our life here. I was able to say nothing. Neither can I say much now: but you have detected before in my letters that when I say least I often mean most.

Norah is very happy with Krishna, who is a charming boy. We may have him for a time in Lahore. If we do, that will please us both, for I am getting quite fond of the seven-year-old myself. . . .

I must really write to Edith; but everything is so painful: events both public and private. I plunge myself into work on my book for the Oxford Press, and for a time succeed in forgetting. Is this wisdom or selfishness?

OUR YOUNG PRINCE

DALHOUSIE,

25 Aug. 1917

. . . You ask about our young prince. He has with him a tutor to teach him Marathi—a venerable person who looks as if he had stepped out of a picture of the Kangra School of Painting. Also he has a military officer to protect him and his household; two servants—one a valet and the other to wait upon him; and a syce to look after his pony. Norah teaches him and mothers him.

He is now at play outside the window constructing mud trenches in which he places lead soldiers. Sometimes he floods the trenches with water, which adds to the realism. He is an exceedingly amiable, docile child, and grows more and more engaging. His quaint English is spoken in the most musical voice, and his imitation of everything I do is most amusing. Thus if I refuse pudding at dinner, nothing will make him eat it. He plays whist rather well, and to please him we have had to institute nearly an hour of it every evening, his old tutor and the three of us making up the four. At first he used to be very depressed when he was beaten, and once he threw down his hand because he hadn't good cards. Norah made him play the game out.

"Two mens are drowned in the tranches!" he announces at this moment from outside the window.

He is very quick at his lessons and at everything else, and is getting on famously.

Rain, rain, rain—almost without ceasing for three days and nights. The mountain roads decay, and there are stoppages in the traffic. I hope we shall have a dry day and a sound road for our return on Sept. 5. Krishna is to come to us at Lahore until his English governess is able to sail from England. He will stay up here for a month after we have gone, unless the desire of his old tutor to get out of the rains and mists into something resembling the warmth and brightness of Central India appeals to His Highness, Krishna's father.

There are troops of grey and brown monkeys in the forests about us. When the hill forests are bare and snow-covered I presume they migrate to the Plains. Dalhousie is their Simla!

OUR PRINCELING

RANIKOT ROAD, LAHORE,

12 Oct. 1917

. . . Our princeling has been here three days. Norah and he have just driven off in the carriage. I went out to see the departure, having a sentimental idea that Norah's maternal pride and Kishen's mauve turban and gleaming white clothes would present a pleasant picture. I found the youngster howling and his face wet with tears because Norah had insisted on his wearing shoes to go out in. He runs about all day with bare feet. Events sometimes are the reverse of our expectations.

To my surprise, Norah made Kishen's tutor sit beside her, and Kishen sit with his back to the horse. Rank is evidently to be waived in the interest of discipline. . . .

KISHEN'S DEWALI

RANIKOT ROAD,

15 Nov. 1917

. . . We have celebrated Dewali in our courtyard. It is a Hindu festival, when thousands of tiny lamps are lighted in the bazaars and on buildings, and fireworks are let off in commemoration of the joy of the return of Rama Chandra, the hero of the Ramayana, to Ayodhya, after his exile in the forest. The ledges of our flat roof bore hundreds of little earthen saucer lamps with cotton wicks floating in oil. We had also coloured paper lanterns, and festoons of strung marigolds; and we had spent ten rupees on fireworks. Friends were invited—an Englishwoman, and her half-Indian daughter who wore crimson Indian trousers; a high-spirited woman in charge of half a dozen little boys about Kishen's age—sons of Punjab Chiefs, all wearing huge cerise turbans. Our Sikh neighbour and his family also came, and two or three favoured students.

When the wonderful half light appeared in the blue sky over our white courtyard wall we lighted up the lamps on the skyline opposite our verandah, upon which we elders sat in state. Nothing is more beautiful than a white wall and the pale light of lamps just when the sky is in its most tender mood.

When darkness reigned, Kishen and his assistants let off the fireworks. What a noise! What a

smoke! *Sulphur*—Oh my stars! Several bombs were exploded with deafening effect within the courtyard walls, and fire balloons were sent sailing over the flat roof across the fields. Indian sweetmeats and fruit were served upon large green leaves—simpler, more beautiful, more Indian than plates. Kishen's excitement was superb! All the cerise-turbanned heads craned together; and the crimson trousers' tears fell at the noise of the bombs; and the witty lady in charge of the cerise turbans remarked that the event would linger in her memory like the sulphur was lingering in her throat!

To-day Kishen's tutor has toothache, and therefore I am seized by the lady who rules this household to accompany Kishen for his morning ride on Peggy. One of his joys is frightening "the Peggy," as he calls her. He lets off Chinese crackers in an earthen pitcher at close quarters and laughs to see Peggy tear her peg out of the ground. Now he is shouting for me. . . .

A LITTLE SERMON

To HIS MOTHER

RANIKOT ROAD,

18 Dec. 1917

. . . Norah and I are going to have as quiet a time as we can, at home, for Xmas. Plague is bad in the city just now. Every case flies to the lungs, and every case is mortal. It is communicated by fleas from diseased rats. We have no rats here so count ourselves safe. The servants are allowed to go into the bazaars as little as possible. In Devapur things are just as bad, so we are not sending Kishen away for the Xmas holidays, as we had intended.

How happy we *should* be as long as we have friends, and others dear to us—and the world at peace. After the war I suppose all common things will have gained in value, which is the way of the world when recovering from great pain. This is a little sermon preached to myself upon the text of your letter—with yourself holding the pen bravely, writing in bed; and your thoughts far away in India—and in the beyond.

Well done, Little Mother!

1918

AEROPLANES

RANIKOT ROAD,

22 Jan'y. 1918

. . . Norah and Kishen and I drove off to-day to the cantonments here to a reception given by the Science Congress. The feature of the afternoon was to be a flight of aeroplanes. There were three on the *maidan*,¹ standing at ease; with mechanics in blue overalls oiling them, and explaining to a crowd. A certain lady of our acquaintance, whose incessant conversation always causes another lady we know to need—and take—a dose of bromide after she has called upon her, came up and threatened to overwhelm me with her discourse. She began: "It is very wonderful, Mr. Richards, that——" And here I interrupted her by saying, "It is all wonderful, Mrs. So-and-so, and I don't believe in any of it!" This had the desired effect of mystifying Mrs. So-and-so, and during her mystification I managed to plane off! By and by the flight officers appeared in uniform and goggles, and one of the motors was set working. Prodigious! The great screw, or whatever they call it, began to revolve—with a throb and a rapidity that beat violently on the air and the ground, and sent up a cloud of dust in our assembled faces. What a display of

¹ = open space.

power! It was marvellous that the frail-looking aeroplane was not shattered to pieces. No bird's wing could compete with it. Mechanics held the planes and prevented the ostrich-like thing from its evident desire to race away over the *maidan*. At last they let go, and the thing moved away from us rapidly, more rapidly, most rapidly—and vanished almost out of sight—still on the ground, however; and we saw it slow down, and thought the attempt to fly must have been a failure. We judged too soon. The thing turned and began to come towards us—fast, faster, fastest! It was close to us! Panic began to seize us! Would it cut us down? No: just less than what seemed to be a dozen yards away, as lightly as a bird, it rose from the ground and flew narrowly over our heads, and snapped its insulting camera in our upturned innocent faces. The officer in command was a cool man.

As we drove home after seeing three flights, Norah and I were impressed by the absolute silence of Kishen. Not a word did he proffer; and we did not try to shake one out of him. He was as quiet as if he were in another world, and his brain no doubt was full of flying machines, and no doubt he saw himself taking flights in them, or touching the machine which threw that powerful but deftly applied force into action. No greater compliment was ever paid to one of the most wonderful works of man than the astonishment and absorption of

this child. The cherubs must look like he did when they see God again.

Yesterday, Kishen and I went out to see our college badly beaten in a football match. We were bored, so we went to the Post Office where Kishen bought one six-anna stamp, one four-anna ditto, one two-anna, and one of one anna and a half. He called them, in the Indian way, *tickets*. I said: "Tell me why you want these stamps." He was nursing them in an envelope. He said he wanted them "for a fun." This morning he was admiring King George—whom he regards as a relative—in his various colours on the stamps, and came to the conclusion that he particularly liked King George in yellow. Then he was told by a gruff voice to go on with his porridge. The gentle voice was not at the breakfast table, because it was in bed with a cold.

GORGEOUSNESS AND SIMPLICITY

RANIKOT ROAD,

26 Jan'y. 1918

. . . We went to the University Sports yesterday, with our princeling at his grandest; a huge turban overlapping his ears—dark red and veined with gold; a long coat nearly down to his ankles, of pink silk and shot gold patches; a lordly little cane with a long silver handle. They have just gone out driving together—N. and K.—the gorgeous turban by the side of Norah in her Quakeress simplicity. The governess from England is expected by every steamer, so it is doubtful if we shall have him much longer. Norah, I am afraid, will weep.

A WOUNDED SOLDIER

RANIKOT ROAD,

9 Feb. 1918

. . . The rough wind chafed Kishen's hands and face, so Norah messed him all over with rosewater and glycerine when he went to bed. He insisted on having his hands and face tied up in pocket-handkerchiefs, and when he looked as if he was the inmate of a hospital, he declared he had come from Mesopotamia. Last night he was very excited because he had bought a small electric torch with red and green glass shades. He fumbled with his hands in pocket-handkerchiefs until he could manage the switch, and announced his intention of consulting his watch with the aid of his lamp as often as he awoke—but he forgot to wake up until daylight was staring into his room.

KISHEN SHOWS OFF

RANIKOT ROAD,
15 Feb. 1918

DEAR UNCLE,

Please send me Rs. 25, because I cannot bear without them. . . . Dear me; if I haven't begun as if I were Kishen writing to his uncle. These were his exact words, and a reply to them was a prompt telegram, assuring him that the rupees were on their way.

It is Basant Panchmi, the Hindu Spring Festival, and Norah is off to the fair-grounds for the whole day, with her box of pastels. Kishen and I will go and fetch her in the carriage in the afternoon.

"When I am rajah," declares Kishen, "I will not live in a city; I will ride in a railway train till I am dead!"

The young imp thoroughly disgraced himself yesterday; showing off before a rival English boy of his own age in a tent where he and Norah went out to lunch. Who could spell best? Who could recite best? all Kishen's small egotisms trotted out like Noah's Ark animals, glad to get an airing out of the ark. In the middle of after-lunch talk, yells were heard and scratching sounds on the roof of the tent. "Oh, my nice tent!" exclaimed the hostess, and rushed out to stop immanent destruction.

There was a scene before Norah and Kishen

started out for the lunch party. Behold my little lord dressed in long white coat and heavy pugri. The sun is hot, the road is dusty, the carriage has gone to fetch me from College. Norah has Kishen's pony brought for him. He wants to walk; refuses to mount; screams when he is not humoured; dashes his turban in the dust; kicks his servant—is all that a tedious heaven-sent child can be! Norah wins in the long run, after infinite patience, but a cap has to be substituted for the spoilt turban.

Our friendly white frosts are no more. We shall soon be gasping like lost souls at the first sight of their purgatorial flames.

“A GOOD TEMPER”

RANIKOT ROAD,

22 Feb. 1918

... Yesterday, in a crowded drawing-room, I read a paper on “A Good Temper.” Discussion followed—purely complimentary—and a bright young person borrowed the paper to show to her husband. I cannot attribute this to flattery, since I cannot see what a lady could see in me. I never was a lady’s man! Now why is this? Nevertheless, when my hostess sat down in her own biggest arm-chair (chairs getting short) and said: “I will occupy this until somebody more important comes,” I said: “That will be for all the evening.” I was in a puckish humour. Another lady saw in my paper her own religion—“Divine Science.” I pretended that her divination was correct. A high Government official’s wife told Norah that her husband says that my speeches are illuminating. What do you think? I said when Norah passed on the remark to me? I said: “That is what I feel about them. I must have looked something like a prophet or a madman, because Norah is best pleased when I wear my hair unfashionably long. A motor-car nearly got entangled in it when I was driving down to College yesterday. The chauffeur missed his goggles, and nobody could say what

had become of them until I combed them out just above my left ear this morning. I have not the man's address, so there they remain on my dressing-table. I wonder if Edith would have any use for them.

TIME

RANIKOT ROAD,
1 March 1918

I don't know what to write about this week. There is no news except that my watch has been repaired, that Norah's watch has had a new glass put in it—and such trifles. But are these trifles? Perhaps they signify that a new Time is coming, a better sort of Time? When Norah's watchglass broke, I said I wondered that the present Time wasn't ashamed to show its face. But Time is ashamed of nothing; no word, no action, no omission is too shocking for Time, except indeed the omission of a single tick. As long as Time goes on he thinks he is doing all he ought to do; and although he strikes he never stops what he calls his work. After all, the best kind of clock is a cuckoo clock, which seems to ridicule Time.

Kishen and I went out for a drive together yesterday afternoon, to give Norah quiet for a headache. We arrived at the Zoo; and Kishen, who loves nothing—except perhaps his uncle and Norah and me—as much as wild animals, wanted to go in. So we went: and saw flamingoes in their pond, and black swans, and a cassowary with a blue beak, and two adjutant birds—tall, self-important-looking creatures whom I called professors—and then bears, and African lions; to say nothing of

monkeys and jackals and wolves, and a hyena or two. Kishen's idea of humour is to mock at the monkeys and roar at the lions. The unchanged face of the lion when Kishen insulted him was more than human in its magnanimity. I said: "Don't mock at him." "Why not?" "Because he is unfortunate, and he is a nobler creature than either of us." Perhaps that was not true. A zoo saddens me—and also makes me ponder how I live safe in the world; how man has managed to survive so much competition, and so many claws and teeth. Kishen wanted to know how the lion was got into his cage, and I had to try to answer him.

How an eagle kept its proud spirit shining from its eyes behind the bars I cannot say; but there it was. A defier of fate.

KISHEN'S SAFETY-VALVE

RANIKOT ROAD,

4 March 1918

. . . The little prince has been howling in a melancholy manner. Howls are part of his nature—a safety-valve after excitement. He gets madly excited—dashing out upon surprised servants with yells from behind curtains, and then tells them how badly he has frightened them. Now he is wandering about the house in a subdued manner, calling out in a softened voice: “Missis!” “Dear!” The ship that brings the English governess to Devapur may have arrived; and at any time we may expect a telegram. When he howls we think there will be compensations; though Norah shrinks from the loss of him.

We have been having a large number of rose-bushes and orange-trees planted in the garden, and Norah has just had a gift of many pots of Madonna lilies. Imagine them in full bloom in the hot Indian night, with their fragrance heavy upon the air! Imagine our moon looking at them and Norah hovering near! May no rain dash them and no tempest shake them.

11 March 1918

. . . Our little prince has left us. A telegram arrived, and he was sent off in the evening of the day following.

AT KASAULI

WADDINGTON COTTAGE,
KASAULI, SIMLA HILLS,

14 July is it? 1918

. . . Norah and I have formed the habit of working every morning until about half-past eleven, and then going for a walk. She writes her play, or plays with her water-colours; I turn essayist, without much success. Then out we go. Our walks are usually downhill, because uphill leads to the villa residences and the haunts of the well-dressed people—whereas we are in search of solitude and ease.

Yesterday's walk took us upon a grassy hillside, and it was I who discovered the pretty colony of mushrooms. Norah produced a spotless pressed handkerchief, and we carried on with us a delicacy for supper. Then we found more mushrooms, and I was at a loss what to look for—landscape or mushrooms. I look upon hillsides now with a different eye.

I woke early this morning and found dawn coming in at the window and Norah asleep—as calm as the dawn. A moment afterwards, that restful figure was sitting up; and a moment after it was out of bed and visiting all the doors and windows in the sitting-room, and opening them. Then it came back and announced that it was going to sleep again. Norah says that she makes a practice of

getting out of bed as soon as her eyes open to the light. She impresses upon me that it is good discipline—strengthening to the will for the rest of the day. The moment the bearer says: *Ghusl ka pani!*¹ up she gets again. There is only one unfortunate consequence of this admirable habit. A little later, bearer is again speaking: *Pani rakh dya, Saheb.*² And Norah expects me to try for myself, and see how excellent a thing is her chosen manner of self-discipline. She points out that if breakfast is over early we have a longer morning and more time for work. And I say: "Explain that again, dear!"—in order that I may have a moment or two more for turning over upon the other side. And I believe I should be in bed at this very moment was not Norah the bed-maker. When she has made her own bed, and then manifests every determination of proceeding to make mine with me in it, I have to get up.

¹ *Ghusl ka pani* = bath water.

² *Pani rakh dya* = I have placed the water.

VISIT TO SIMLA

30 July 1918

. . . Since I last wrote to you we have paid a visit to Simla. We went to stay with some Sikh friends, whom Norah has attracted by her devotion to the development of Punjabi Drama. The Sirdar and his family live in a beautiful house on the eastern side of Simla, surrounded by a beautiful garden. The style of life indoors is European; though the ladies preserve their Indian dress and some of them profess to be disinclined to eat with anything but their fingers; so for them, brass *thalis*¹ are brought to table and we all dine together in the way most becoming to us. Our host is an enlightened and cultivated man, who carries on—in the Punjab and in the United Provinces—very valuable experiments in agriculture. Withal, he is a philosopher, and I found him very attractive. The garden had pleasant seats commanding magnificent hill prospects to north and south; and the house was full of books. Altogether, taking the garden, the house with its library, its inmates with their strange pleasant way of living, the family atmosphere, the landscapes we looked upon, and what we saw of Simla itself—putting all this together, our four days were crowded. I forgot to tell you of the

¹ = a large platter upon which are small bowls containing liquid food and dry food on the platter—a complete meal.

luxurious bathrooms with water that had been heating slowly by electricity while we slept. The Sirdar's house was a home—a rare thing out here. Moreover, it was the best blending of East and West, in the art of living, that has yet come our way.

PRAYING FOR RAIN

KASALI,

18 August 1918

. . . Rain is badly needed—and for several days, in the evening, the villagers about us have formed themselves into a procession, dancing, and beating drums; imploring Indra, the god of rain, to come to their rescue. They followed a lofty bamboo—that looked like a gigantic fishing-rod, in that it tapered away almost to nothing—on which was a flag and to which were fastened cocoanuts, cloths, and other votive offerings—even the hand-fans with which the household charcoal is encouraged to burn. A holy man, in his shrimp-coloured garments, accompanied each procession. Imagine a long straggling line of villagers, upon a narrow mountain path, arriving against the skyline stretching up their arms to the clear and empty skies.

MUSHROOM HILL

KASAUJI,

25 August 1918

. . . Rain has fallen at last—in torrents! It is a good thing for the whole of India—but particularly is it good for the mushrooms. Norah and I went out with a basket on to Mushroom Hill yesterday. We found two glorious, recently risen, white umbrellas in long grass; and then for some time, no more. The hill has several shoulders—Norah went towards one, I to another. Then I saw Norah on her knees filling her basket; but I found nothing. The clouds came up the valley, mists rolled round us; and there was Norah, an impressive figure—sitting at ease against the skyline. This impressive figure rose and became animated. It shouted: “It is getting late! Let us go home!” But I had discovered a region of terraces—just the most promising ground for the furtive mushroom. So I shouted back: “Half a minute!”—and dashed down the slope—to light upon a colony of dainty white fungi—delicate morsels, delicious titbits!

At supper-time Norah fries them in butter, sprinkles salt and pepper, and then drowns them in milk; and when the milk boils up she thickens it with cornflour; and finally she pours this concoction upon hot-buttered toast. I could grow eloquent on the subject.

Ah, the fleshy mouthfuls!

That was an involuntary exclamation.

Are you fond of mushrooms? I can't get them out of my mind.

We use a *dekchi*¹; but you would take a frying-pan. Our butter was buffalo butter, and our milk was buffalo milk. You can do it just as well with cow's. The cornflour came from the United States.

Dear me—I am absorbed again. I shall become a man of one idea.

To-day we have bright sunshine, and Norah and I intend to trip off together—not in search of mushrooms—confound the mushrooms—but in search of views.

In these days, after rain, the hills beyond Simla—the mountains rather—disclose themselves with their snow-white tops. Usually, like the world beyond this world, they are hidden from sight, and it is impossible to believe in their existence. A little obscuring of the atmosphere, a layer of cloud—and a mountain range is hidden! This is a parable.

They taste most deliciously of Woodlands, and are like nothing else in a dish. I am talking of course of mushrooms, and not of mountains. I can't help myself!

With love to you and mushrooms.

Mush . . . I mean,

ERNEST

¹ A cooking vessel without a handle.

ARMISTICE

RANIKOT ROAD, LAHORE,

15 Nov. 1918

. . . On Monday evening Nov. 11, about ten minutes to nine, Norah and I, sitting in our drawing-room, heard the Cathedral bells ringing, and the same thought came into both our minds—the news had reached Lahore! We set the verandah door open wide, in spite of the cold wind, to hear the sound the better; and we found the next morning that our conviction was well founded—the Armistice had been signed.

Poor Norah! That next morning she was in tears. She had not known till then how much she had felt the war. She said that she knew I was thinking of Wilfrid while we were listening to the bells. I can only conjecture that she knew this because she was thinking about Wilfrid herself. He helped to bring the victory, but had no share in the rejoicing for peace. His photograph appeared on the mantelpiece on that day of gladness; and in front of it Norah had scattered jasmine blossoms, plucked from the garden.

We had unusual scenes here—flags and placards in Hindustani; people driving about in carriages decorated with flags; soldiers cheering and singing; bombs going off; the guns of the Fort firing; bands playing; and so on. A great relief has taken posses-

sion of us. Every Indian I meet seems to look at my face, with special curiosity, to see if an emotion is written upon it.

The terms of the Armistice are certainly crushing. Now the whole of Europe is threatened with the crudest kind of socialism—such as may in a short time make Germany wish the Kaiser was back. Our English socialism, refined by the Fabian Society, is a very different thing from the Marxian class-hatred which is common in Germany—the fruit of long years of suffering on the part of the “proletariate.” At any rate, the world is moving; and it is going to be extraordinarily interesting. A new Europe will emerge.

I shall begin to enjoy the gee and the carriage, and this pleasant house and garden, now that the war is over.

FOLK—AND THEIR LIBERTIES

RANIKOT ROAD,

5 *Jan'y.* 1919

DEAR MADRE,

The happiest and best of New Years to You. The mail threatens to be regular again: so I must resume my custom of writing regularly. . . . I suppose you were not among the crowds which danced in the London streets? And I suppose the war is over? . . .

How is Heavitree settling itself? Is Betham returning to Hampstead with his family? The place for you, I think, would be in a house in the Suburb, near at hand—not in the same house, because old folk like their liberties, and their chairs in particular corners, and freedom from interruptions. Young folk like their liberties too. . . .

The Martins are shrinking from paying £300 for their passages, although they badly want to go home this year. Do the English papers tell you of the extraordinary congestion of people in the Bombay hotels, waiting for ships?

CLOUDS!

22 Jan. 1919

A pale morning moon amid white clouds! We so seldom see clouds that I am obliged to put these in a letter. Perhaps, seeing too many, you will object.

Our cold weather is packing up, to depart. The spring flower *basanti*, known in England by the homely name of mustard, is already blossoming under the orange-trees; and youngsters are getting ready their kites to fly them upon the great day which, in their calendar, separates winter from spring. The Punjab suffers so severely from the cold that comes down from the Hills, that one cannot wonder at the welcome given to the return of warmer days; although in a few months there will be groans again, and with greater reason. The hot weather that enervates to inertia is more cruel to the native of the Punjab than the cold weather that kills with pneumonia. India is a lazy land, in spite of the hard work of nearly three hundred million peasants. In parts of the country, where there is no cold weather, the habits and manners of all but the hardy peasant are, the whole year round, languid. In the intense heat, mere relaxation from work is as desirable and cheering as successful activity in your temperate zone.

“TEST” EXAM AND A RAT

2 Feb. 1919

. . . Showers of exam papers have descended upon me, and are descending. It is our annual “Test” Exam. If a youngster does not pass us, we refuse to send his name in to the Registrar: hence the students are in awful fear. A solemn Council Meeting will sit to consider results when all the marks are in. Happy when! At this moment a man is carrying on his head, from the college to this house, a box containing 100 more long answer books. Just consider the million curls of the pen there are in those answer books, and that my eye has to follow every one of them.

Norah has just failed to kill a rat in the garden. She stood, spade in hand, outside his hole for ten minutes—waiting to strike him. He did not come: and the reason was that he was popping his head out of another hole and looking at her and the spade—just behind her.

AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE

9 Feb. 1919

... Conversation at the breakfast table this morning turned upon the death of Nelson. Norah and I had a moment or two thinking over that wonderful dying request: "Kiss me, Hardy," and the equally selfless: "Anchor, Hardy, anchor." Then Browning came in:

... with his elbow digging,
Jigging as it were and zig-zag-zigging
Up against the mizen-rigging—

à propos of the stain of tar which is exhibited on board the *Victory* upon the sleeve of Nelson's coat.

Then happening to have in the house Robert Bridges' *Demeter*, we thought of the good fortune of the Somerville girls who had such a "mask" written for them, and acted in it, and had their names printed at the end of the play—a poem in their musical enumeration. How fortunate we were, we said, that such a man as the Poet Laureate should be living in our own time—with such a mark of style—so absolutely free from vulgarity. Do you know the speech of Persephone about flowers? What do you think of the description of the wood anemone? I must quote it:

Who taught thee else, thou frail anemone,
Thy starry motion, thy wind-wavering motion,
Thy complex of chaste beauty, unimagined
Till thou art seen?—

Nothing better anywhere in English. Fancy the privilege of Miss "Octavia Mariana Myers" who for the first time made audible such sounds, and passed into everlasting currency such a description for ever of everything or anything beautiful,—“Thy complex of chaste beauty”—I daresay herself for instance, or one’s Mother! I suppose my thoughts were dragged to this passage by a discovery I had made the day before of a weed in our garden, a tall plant with fan-like leaves but such a manner of holding them with a little kink in the stem, just as if she were about to drop them off but contrived to hold them nevertheless with inconceivable grace. Here if anywhere—in this unknown weed—is an affected plant, but a very charming affectation, like the whimsiest whims in women.

Bridges, like Shakespeare, manages to convey the personal character and spirit of a woman by making her talk about flowers.

Frail daffodils that come before the swallow dares, and take
The Winds of March with beauty.

Do we not know all about the soul of a woman who said that? If men are like trees, many of them, women are aptest to be compared with flowers and exquisite leaves and stems, and hence part of the appropriateness of putting flower-speeches into their mouths. If I were a poet—and why did you not create me as such?—I should copy this trick and make a garden of fair women. Why does Shelley

put a woman into the garden where grows his Sensitive Plant, and not a man? Perhaps there was a man there. Perhaps his Sensitive Plant was himself. Perhaps after all men are more sensitive than women—witness Nelson—and perhaps women are more heroic than men? I have plenty reasons for such a supposition—the latter part of it—which I do not care to relate.

The Essays which I wrote at Kasauli I still believe in, but some months of their lying by in a drawer while I was waiting for the address of an Editor have shown me some flaws which I shall remove when I have leisure, before I send them to tempt their fate. For £30 Norah and I have engaged a cottage at Dalhousie for the hot weather, and so preoccupied and put out of humour do I become by college work—including hundreds of examination papers—that I am inclined to believe I shall not touch the Essays again until I can give my whole self to them at Dalhousie. *And* when I go to Dalhousie, be quite sure there will go with me the complete poems of Robert Bridges!

. . . Norah says that she felt the remark of Edith's about letters, and that she writes to her sisters about as seldom as she does to any of you. Moreover, by woman's logic, she goes on to say that since she and I are so completely one, a letter from me is a letter from her!

That is finer for me than for you!

RAIN

16 Feb. 1919

. . . Thunder is going on while I write, and heavy rain. It is so dark at 3 p.m. that I have put on the electric light. Nature appears to be endeavouring violently to repair some of the mischief she has done to our crops by withholding rain at the proper season; and, like most fussy persons, she is only making a worse mess of the effects of her own negligence. You can almost hear the earth drinking. Spouts of water from the verandahs are wading in their own splash. Servants, struggling across the courtyard, flounder in mud. The sky is a flat sheet of grey, and between the thunder-rolls, unemotionally pours. The day is as dull as the most commonplace person, and mechanical in all its doings. Somebody has turned a tap on in heaven, and forgotten to turn it off. All qualities are whelmed in one—in *wetness*. And to tell me the sun is shining upon the other side of the clouds, in no way mends the matter.

The college boat club had its races a few days ago, and the staff was expected to watch. The river was wide, but little more than two feet deep. As one of the students was about to step into his boat, another—from within—gave him a push. He fell overboard and the students in the boat jeered. This was too much for the insulted victim. His face

suddenly blazed with anger, and he sprang at the fellow who had caused it. I expected to see the boat-load in the water and was about to interfere when reason prevailed, and friendliness was re-established. (In our hot climate tempers boil up in a moment, and if knives are about, death may be the instant result. My own temper has taken to slipping its leash on a sudden, and I have to be on my guard. It is great foolishness to do a bad-tempered thing in class and be secretly sorry for it afterwards. Your temperate climate helps you to be reasonable.) You never saw such rowing—every oar going at its own speed like a distracted windmill! Two boats collided, and there was a prolonged discussion as to whether there had been a foul. The judge—a young Indian professor—wavered in his decision. The matter was then referred to me—in my armchair on a mudbank—but I declined to be dragged in. “If it was not a fowl,” I said, “perhaps it was a fish. Inquire from the Professor of Biology.”

In College Council this morning we were considering what should be done to a student who had stuck up a notice threatening to assassinate the Principal if certain students, who have been kept back a year on account of their bad work, were not allowed to go up for the University examination. These young savages are recalcitrant to discipline, and I suppose there is not a Principal in Lahore who has not received threatening letters at one

THE SUPRAMUNDANE

10 March 1919

. . . Your February letter, received to-day, reads strangely in our growing heat with your account of snow and skating. A few days—and one is suddenly transported out of cold winds into heat that requires the shedding of nearly every garment. The hornets have woken up; and they infest our letter-box and enter the house, every time a chik blows out, to look for places in which to begin building their nests. I have killed so many—and twice, so nearly got stung at the letter-box—that I am almost wishing winter back again! I had to fight a hornet for your letter. What use was it to him?

At our Literary and Debating Society last week, the proposition was that the artistic temperament was an unnecessary evil. Norah, who is determined to practise speaking—I don't know why—made a brave little speech, out of which her thoughts came all crumpled because she was nervous. Next week, to the same society, I am reading a paper called "The Supramundane." Norah has written to the Secretary, who is Registrar of the University, to propose that our last meeting shall be a performance of a scene from *Midsummer Night's Dream* in a garden—Norah to be Titania; the Registrar to be Bottom, etc. The thing has gone no farther at present than a reply from the Registrar in the following terms:

GARDENER ROBBED

To HIS MOTHER

18 GOLF ROAD,

23 March 1919

. . . Note our change of address. We are not there yet, though we shall have moved by the time you get this. Whereby hangs a tale.

Some little time ago the landlord's clerk came for some cement that was kept in the gardener's house. The gardener was absent and his house locked up, but the clever clerk espying the key under a piece of rag, drew it out. He opened the door and entered, accompanied by two coolies. When the gardener returned he found that five rupees had been stolen. We of course wrote to the landlord and suggested that the clerk was responsible for the loss, and that he (the clerk) should make it good. To this letter, our landlord—a rich Hindu, mad with avarice—failed to reply. In due course he sent his clerk for the rent, from which we (having refunded the gardener his stolen money) had stopped five rupees. The very next morning we received the belated reply to our report of the theft, in the shape of a registered letter; giving us notice to quit and professing sorrow for the inconvenience to which we were being subjected. We understood the reason and object of this notice. Had we flattered and wheedled a little, and been

willing to pay the five rupees, it would have been withdrawn. But being a little sick of our landlord's avarice, and more than disgusted with a caprice that gave us notice after all we had done in three years to improve the house and garden—we determined to take him at his word, if we could. That very day a two-storeyed house in a garden was being advertised at the other side of Lahore, near the Lawrence Gardens. We went to see it, and were charmed with its long-established garden of banana palms, mango and guava trees. It was overrun with roses and motias gone wild, and the high orange hedges were overgrown by rambling festoons of pink cluster-roses. The situation is delightful—green and cool. We straightway took it and are moving on April 15! Avarice can congratulate itself that it has lost good tenants—and, incidentally, done them a benefit!

To-morrow begins the Matric Exam, and I shall be overwhelmed with work for a hot three weeks of it—college, matric, private students, and house-moving!

MAGIC IN COURTESY

30 March, 1919

Norah lately made the acquaintance of a charming little girl, one of our neighbours, whose remark has been reported to us, that she thought Mrs. W. and Mrs. R. the two most beautiful ladies in Lahore. I do not suppose the little girl has seen many ladies, but undoubtedly her remark shows perception. I am resolved to invite her to tea. I carried this anecdote to Mrs. W., who in University circles holds a very prominent position. She replied: "How delightful to be associated with Mrs. R.!" Mrs. W. is really very excellent. Last summer, Norah was exceedingly proud of some marbly tomatoes which she had succeeded in producing in this garden; and she sent a basketful to Mrs. W., who replied praising, not the size of the vegetables which was their weak point, but their flavour: "How clever of you to grow tomatoes of such a fine flavour." Here all the virtues of the tomatoes were interpreted into a merit to Norah—a very delightful example of the magic in courtesy!

A PARADISE

GOLF ROAD, LAHORE,

14 April, 1919

Here we are, my dear Madre, in the pomegranate shade of our new garden—a Paradise; *filled with peace*. But around us just now is anything but peace!

India has been trying its hand at political propaganda, and the result is anarchy and murder. Lahore is in the possession of armed police and British troops. Women and children have been ordered to leave for Hill stations, and many would have done so had not the railway lines been breached here and there. As soon as they are repaired I suppose the exodus will begin. Norah obstinately refuses to leave Lahore before I do.

When it all began, I but confusedly remember. On Thursday last, at about 7 p.m., our next-door neighbour at Ranikot Road—a Sikh Sirdar—desired to see us. He had just come from the railway station, and asked if we knew what was happening. We did not. He then told us of the excitement that prevailed, and of the sudden closing of all the shops in Lahore as soon as the news arrived of the “arrest” of Gandhi, upon his attempting to enter the Punjab. There had been mob violence and firing in Delhi only a few days before when a similar “strike” (hartal) had begun; hence the military here were at once sent to their stations. Singularly enough,

the week before, our neighbour—the Sirdar—had suffered a dacoity—fierce fighting on his verandah at 2 a.m. His chowkidar was struck on the head with a staff and an axe. The pair of all but naked and *greased* dacoits visited us first! Norah heard them in our courtyard, but didn't waken me. I even slept through the fighting. Norah didn't. The next morning we found the padlock they had wrenched off our courtyard door, from the inside. *Why*, heaven knows! Why couldn't they have got out as they came in, probably by scaling the wall? These are mysteries. They left us alone, the police said, because we were Europeans and therefore bound to have firearms. We had none! It was more likely that our neighbour, who is a landed gentleman, and often at loggerheads with his tenants, was the target. Moreover, it was quite easy to confuse our houses; especially as, with our courtyard, we looked more Indian than our neighbour's open bungalow. However, for the next few nights eight policemen surrounded our neighbour's house and ours, since the attack had been so determined that it was feared it would be renewed with arms. A lively situation for us. Well—no sooner does this blow over than a heavier threat appears.

The hartal was on, as the Sirdar told us; and there was every prospect of a violent mob overrunning the European quarter. This was on Thursday last. Norah and I were invited to join forces with our nearest European neighbours—Post Office people,

whose friendship we had recently made. We went over to their house, and while Norah talked to the lady and her little girl, the Deputy Postmaster-General for the Punjab, Baluchistan, and Aden, asked me to step into his bedroom. *The first thing*—on his bed were three rifles, a revolver, and a display of ammunition. *The second thing*—I was not to tell the ladies—five Europeans murdered in Amritsar (30 miles off); the banks burned; station partly set on fire; etc. Hence, he advised us to sleep in their house for the night. Norah thought it unnecessary, and may have been surprised by my firmness in deciding to send for our camp-beds. We got across with our things just before dark; and then, after dark, heard the mob howling. A weird sound—an angry mob; separated from you by a thin line of men in khaki.

Next day, the mob on the Mall were making for Government House, when six or seven were shot down (wounded only). Since then, every one has been refusing to work for Europeans—our servants are all of them loyal to us—and with a little difficulty we can get supplies. The colleges have joined in the strike. I had two boys out of a class of 100—11 boys in college altogether; so we are closed until after Easter, when the hubbub may have subsided. We all have our instructions what to do—where to go—in case of danger. An alarm signal is to be given by cannon-fire, and a continuous half-hour scream of a siren. Three ringleaders were arrested

yesterday and the authorities were in hourly expectation of having to give the signal. I knew nothing of this, but drove into Lahore to see Martin. He was not in, being on military duty. Mrs. Martin and Dr. Haegert, who rents part of their house, were going out in the carriage on the doctor's rounds, since she objected to remaining by herself. I went with them. At all the important points were British khaki and machine-guns. And at the Law Courts—Martin in uniform, with about 20 Indian Defence Force captains, their Colonel, and a General with a red tab. When our carriage stopped, Martin came up and told us the alarm signal might go off at any moment, and we were to dash for our places of refuge. Norah was two miles away and knew nothing of this! At the same time news was spreading of mobbing at Amritsar, and 200 shot down.

I forgot to say that on Friday last Norah and I were driven by our loyal coachman through the deserted streets to Walter Locke's, where we bought pistols and ammunition. The shop had been open all night selling arms to Europeans. Our two weapons, added to the three rifles and one other revolver of our European neighbours, made of us quite a garrison.

Meanwhile, we had to move out of our house by April 15, Furniture removals are made here in bullock wagons, and apparently all were on strike, except the one possessed by our old gardener's son. He has gradually pulled our household goods

across. There remains but one load more. Every load had to follow the route in which it was least likely to be stopped, plundered, or set on fire! Twice the wagon was stopped—on the way back, empty. And once it was detained for a whole day. We sleep with loaded pistols under our pillows, and our bundles ready packed for instant flight. We are in daily expectation of the joint family of our landlord, a Hindu who lives in the City. He thinks it unsafe, and we have put the lower floor of our house at their disposal. At present it is a chaotic heap of furniture. To-morrow Norah hopes to tackle it.

A dacoity; a household move under "fire"; and an attempted revolution—all well within a fortnight! If you find this letter incoherent, you need not wonder. I feel incoherent.

E.

P.S.—Norah asks you to send us two pairs of hedging-gloves and gardening gauntlets—the latter, made of woven grass; possibly Japanese.

LUCKY ESCAPE FOR LAHORE

23 April 1919

. . . Was it last Thursday it all began or was it the Thursday before? It seems a long time! The authorities in Lahore had had news of the murders in Amritsar when the mob in Lahore began to march up the Mall with the design of getting into the civil station—where Europeans preponderate. If they had got in, the scenes at Amritsar would probably have been re-enacted upon a larger scale. They were stopped by a handful of police who fired their rifles—and a few cavalry. Representatives of the mob are now saying that they only intended a harmless march and that there was no need for the police to fire. No officer, however, would have been justified in allowing the mob to proceed under any circumstances; still less after hearing the news—which many in the mob must also have known—of the murdered Europeans in Amritsar.

No, Lahore has had a lucky escape from attempted massacre. Not all in the crowd meant harm, but a sufficient number must have done so. The arrangements for Europeans are most complete. About 700 women and children have been sent off to the Hills in special trains. Norah refused to go. A signal was arranged to summon us all to places of refuge, if necessary—the sounding of a syren, church bells, cannon. And private persons owning motor-cars

were told off in each quarter to collect the women and children from the bungalows in case of need. For some days Lahore has been under martial law and all possibility of mischief seems to have vanished. The city is ruled by a Colonel who announces that martial law is whatever he likes to command for the public safety! Hence all Indians must be within doors between 8 p.m. and 5 a.m. Flagrant night wanderers can be whipped. All Indians have been required to deliver up motor-cars and bicycles; 60 prominent Indians have been arrested in Lahore alone, and to put a stop to the mischievous activities of certain colleges (of which ours is not one), all students of those colleges are to report themselves to a military officer four times a day. This is the greatest bore to the students who are sighing for a return to civil rule. Everything is being done to persuade the Indian that sedition is uncomfortable.

An extraordinary campaign of lies against the Government has been carried on throughout the country. Things have come to a head in the Punjab and elsewhere, and perhaps the country will possess a more settled disposition after it. . . . All danger to the European residents seems to have passed away. College is shortly reopening.

Put upon the stone not *he gave his life*, which is sentimental. Engrave simply:

He died upon the Somme.

Our much love to you in our new freedom from anxiety.

E.

AFGHANISTAN DECLARES WAR

9 May 1919

. . . The pretty little plot against the Government having so far failed, the new Amir of Afghanistan—who is credited with having murdered his father, the late Amir—has declared war upon India. He has represented to his subjects that the Punjab is in a state of revolt, and offers an easy prey and plunder to his valiant soldiers! His object seems to be to divert attention from his claims to the succession, and to make a bid for popularity. Hence, excitement at Peshawar that is just on the border at the entrance to the chief pass into Afghanistan; and a pressure of work at Simla—and probably, a real war that may last for months. Since troops were keeping the population quiet in many parts of the Punjab it is not without anxiety that the Government is moving troops up to the Frontier. Still there are large numbers of British soldiers in India, and the Punjab is likely to be packed with them before long.

Martin is in the Indian Defence Force, and has had a great deal of military duty during the recent crisis, and anticipates more now. His home is near the Electric Light Works, and one night he was put on guard at one of the approaches to the place just outside his own house. Needless to say, Mrs. Martin visited her husband

and the rest of the guard at midnight with refreshments.

While other colleges have been deeply involved in the disturbances we have kept clear, partly by luck, partly by Martin's superb management.

If you hear the Indian Government criticized for severity, don't believe the critics. It is possible that the old Amir's murder and the new Amir's conduct and the risings in so many places are all parts of one big plot financed by Germany and Bolshevism. Bolshevik money is reported to be reaching India. It is a blessing we kept all so quiet during the war.

THE ROWLATT ACT

15 May 1919

. . . Things are pretty normal here now. Martial law is still in force, but I should not wonder if the opinion of most educated people is that they have made fools of themselves over the Rowlatt Act. Why should they object to a severe measure aimed at anarchists? This is an illustration of the lack of wisdom which is to be expected out here in nearly everything political. The most foolish customs, superstitions, and beliefs, are to be found in India, unless, perhaps, Egypt is as bad. The Oriental is a man with a tremendously good opinion of himself based upon ignorance of himself and others. Such ignorance and bigotry as exists out here has to be seen to be believed.

There is a proposal to close the colleges on June 7, and reopen Sept. 1. This is because two of the colleges are half occupied as barracks for soldiers and there seems no immediate prospect of the soldiers' going. September is an abominable month—half the students are bound to be down with malaria. It comes after the rains when the mosquitoes have things all their own way.

There is a plague of mosquitoes just now—worse than for years. The coming hot weather—which is not yet quite hot enough for the purpose—will extinguish the pest until the rains bring it out again.

Last night, sleeping upon our roof, Norah and I were suddenly blown out of bed by a violent dust-storm which hid the moon and was on us without warning. Imagine the mosquito-nets in a tempest and clouds of dust. Imagine the smell of your mosquito-nets after the dust has been blown into every thread of them. We retired indoors under a punkah. These midnight alarms and excursions in boiling heat are not the best preparation for a smooth temper the following day.

A CAT PARABLE

25 May 1919

. . . We are off to Hurst Cottage, Dalhousie, on Friday next. Since trains aren't running at night we shall have to travel from here by day in the heat. Norah already has struck against making tea in the hot carriage, which I think is a mistake. Perhaps I will try to reason with her; but what striker ever listened to reason? We shall have two servants and a cat. Norah insists on the cat. It belonged to the last tenants and stopped here when they went. At first it yowled all day long, but more especially at meal times; and once it jumped from the floor upon our fish. I told the sweeper to do away with it, and he got so far as tying a ragged piece of rope round its neck. When Norah saw the rope she made inquiries and cancelled the order. Since then, good feeding has improved the manners of the cat. Ah! what a parable. Our morals and our manners, my dear Madre, are dependent upon whether or not we are well fed. How the cat will enjoy the basket I know not, but I should think the conversation of so vigorous a creature will be interesting in the train.

Friends of ours want to leave their dog with us when they go to England on leave—a black spaniel. But we are not natural hosts for dogs. We are not like another friend who marches out with a dozen

dogs behind him, all of which he has adopted temporarily while their owners are away.

Up to the Hills I am taking half a dozen volumes of young poets whom I have recently got into the University Library. Also a History of English Prosody and a dictionary—in case there should be any hard words in that book which I do not know. Also, a guide to the Stars, whose acquaintance I have lately been re-making.

Lahore is quiet enough now, but martial law is still enforced, and newspapers are still being censored. What will happen when authority relaxes its hand remains to be seen. The next few years out here are likely to be uncomfortable—the after-effects of the war; and influenza, which killed six million: and now, famine, with little reduction in the abominable high prices, increases the unrest. Add to this the unrestrained language, and (to put it mildly) lack of veracity of many vernacular papers.

Eh bien, nous verrons.

With love from us both,

E.

The Afghan threat has sobered the province.

JOURNEY TO DALHOUSIE

HURST COTTAGE, DALHOUSIE,
2 June 1919

. . . Here we are, at Dalhousie once more. But what a journey! Due to the "disturbanees" trains were not running in the night, so we had seven hours of a crowded second-class carriage, by day, with the thermometer above 100°. Then we slept at the dak bungalow at Pathankot, sent on the 25 items of baggage with two servants in tum-tums, and started by motor-lorry ourselves next morning at 6 a.m. The lorry goes but half-way. Change at Dunera into a tonga with very hard seats. For about an hour we were held up in the hottest part of the day by two jibbing horses. We passed our baggage, that was resting by the roadside. All that we had with us was cut down to the motor-lorry minimum of 30 lb. each. Norah's ears were deaf with fatigue, and so were mine. We were as thirsty as Anglo-Saxons, who in history are always wiping their beards. At the tonga terminus we got into dandies and were shouldered up to this place by coolies. No food with us, no servants. Fortunately, the man who looks after the place had obeyed Norah's instructions and got in some milk. We had tea and sugar in the tea-basket, and indulged in alternate cups of tea and hot milk. Darkness descended—no candle, no baggage—merely our

sheets and pillows. We were dead sleepy. I said: "Let us not sit up in the dark for the baggage that may not turn up until to-morrow. Let us take off our boots and sleep under the sheets in our clothes." Said and done. At 2 a.m.—steps. It was one servant with three coolies and the bedding. The rest of the baggage would come next day. Norah and I unpacked the mattresses and blankets, made comfy beds—and slept the sleep of travellers.

Our first impression of the cottage when we arrived was anything but favourable. We think better of it now. It is perched on a steep wooded slope, and beyond a deep valley are white-capped mountains. There is as yet much snow on the summits. Climbing roses bloom on our verandah, and columbines are wild all over the hillside that is immediately behind and above us—and ox-eyed daisies. We have cleared out half the furniture of this place and all the carpets, and feel happier. This morning Norah scrubbed the floor of our study, and I wiped the boards after her. We had breakfast on the verandah looking out upon a glorious view—and we know that we are very lucky!

We left Pussy behind—too great an effort in the heat.

MONSOON

8 June 1919

. . . It has been 117° in the shade in Lahore since we left; and even up here it has been too hot to do one's best work. *Now* there is a great change. Our mountains are but dimly visible in an inky haze over against us; clouds are forming and dissolving in the valley below; thunder has been incessantly rumbling for five hours; and rain occasionally falling. In short, authentic signals announce the monsoon.

Last year the rainfall in India was below the average; this year the monsoon is early, so the average is likely to be made up. It has now begun to pour. No sitting out in the garden to-day under the holm oak on a ledge of the steep hillside, where the other day we had an amusing adventure. Norah and I had been sitting out in cane chairs, and when we got up to go indoors and I lifted mine to take it in, it slipped out of my hand and began bounding down the slope off the narrow ledge. I expected it to pull up in a bush or against a tree, but every wicker fibre in it turned into a spring and it bounded higher and higher, and it leapt with a more and more devilish ingenuity out of the path of everything that tried to grasp it, until it disappeared out of sight—still bounding—at an unknown distance below. Norah was capsized with laughter, but I was anxious. I pictured the thing

leaping on to the path beneath us and startling a horse, thus being instrumental perhaps in hurling a rider over the khud. I ran down by the path that zigzagged in its descent and when the Z had brought us (Norah had come with me) immediately underneath our house, there was the chair sitting upright and prim in the middle of the path as if it had never done such a thing as run away! The path had been wide enough to arrest it after a furious leap off a mossy rock twelve feet or more in height.

A day or two ago a peculiar scent invaded all the windows of the cottage and warned us of the presence of the white-bearded and grey-furred folk whom I do not know whether to call apes, or monkeys, or men. The local name for them is *langur*. There they were, thick in the trees and gathering the small acorns that grow upon the holm oak; scratching each others backs; crashing from branch to branch like so many acrobats in a circus—and one little fellow, for pure joy of life turned two successive somersaults backwards in the wantonness of his ecstasy. This is how you and I ought to feel. Here is a sermon from the woods! But life has sobered us; or rather, we have allowed it to abstract from us the fine spirit of joyousness.

A great ape—or was it monkey, or man?—the embodiment of content, sat upon his haunches and searched among the fallen leaves with his hand for acorns. You should have heard him crunch them.

We have good neighbours!

"COSY, ISN'T IT?"

20 something June, 1919

. . . Norah, who is busy at her writing-table, just looked round with the remark: "Cosy, isn't it?" Outside our cottage a thunderstorm is going on: it is pouring with rain: and because Norah is not getting wet she is "subject to illusion." But my reply undeceived her. I pointed out that I was—at my end of the room—living in a whirlwind: draught from the door on my left; draught from the chimney behind my chair; draught from the window on my right hand. Therefore there has just been a fixing up of curtains, to the accompaniment of a downfall of whitewashed plaster off the wall into which nails were driven.

A propos of Wilx's property. When the idea was first mooted I swore I'd receive none of it. Since then, the copy of a Will has been forwarded to me from the War Office—and since the boy himself made this disposition, my feelings are changed.

I wish I had brought out some of his pictures. His letters, which I have been reading over again, are a joy. Such happy careless descriptions of landscape, with the artist's eye and mind behind them. He was all but on the double line of painter and man of letters. Years might have ripened him in one way or the other. However, the faculty of perception is as much to be valued as the faculty

of creation, which, obviously, is intended to belong only to the few. The greatest minds can fail in creation—e.g. Browning, whose two volumes I have dragged up these hills for three months' companionship. At least a volume and a half is not poetry but prose in blank verse. Even such a man as this couldn't for long be at the top of himself, but I respect him the more for not caring a damn.

I have at last discovered in another fellow my own religion—Clutton Brock, in his two little books *The Ultimate Faith* and *Studies in Christianity*. They say nothing about immortality, with regard to which I am unconvinced by Sir Oliver Lodge and other psychic writers. I incline to believe in ghosts—a Colonel we know in Lahore saw one recently—but even ghosts do not persuade me in immortality. I neither believe nor disbelieve.

MOUNTAIN MISTS

19 July perhaps, 1919

. . . I have just tossed a lot of fir cones upon the fire, and probably along with them one or two scorpions. The monsoon has been fine on the mountains this year. It is something to see the clouds roll themselves out across the valleys between the peaks. The rains have brought down the temperature considerably—hence our fir-cone fire, with its sweet smell. Sometimes we are shrouded in mists—our cottage and all the trees round it, with their many branches dripping with moisture. Occasionally the clouds boil up from the valleys under us. There has been much thunder, but more musical than alarming so far.

The motor transport between here and the Plains is constantly breaking down, delaying our letters and detaining passengers *en route*. The Afghan trouble has diverted most of the motors to the Frontier; so we mustn't grumble if we experience difficulties upon our return about a month hence.

.

Charles Lamb's *Essays*—do you ever peep into them? I brought them up as usual this year, and they remain for me inimitable. All sorts of wonderful feelings underly the sentences. Describing a country walk he can make you feel the depth of his affection

for his sister whom he calls his cousin, Bridget: and then his jokes! For pure music of prose—based less upon artistry than upon all that he has known and felt—nobody can match him. He was a wonderful person—and all the great ones in literature always are. I know of such a one who is writing just now—and he is producing not works of art but philosophy. I refer to Clutton Brock whose writings bring me endless content. Because the books are so good, I judge of the man, whom I do not know. Just advertised is his new volume *What is the Kingdom of Heaven?*

A fellow selling strawberries makes his appearance—wild ones of course—and raspberries. They are very nice except for the discovery, now and then, of a miniature centipede in them. As bad as caterpillars in cabbages—the boiled variety.

PEACE DAY

TO HIS MOTHER

20 July 1919

. . . By the time you get this we shall have left here for the Plains again. Yesterday was the local Peace Day. I do not know what went on in the heavy rain. In the evening, however, the weather cleared. Norah and I joined some other folk in a walk round this hill—getting a wonderful view of the Plains in the clear atmosphere. At home we were sitting at supper by the window when we noticed the brilliant light which fell upon Norah. We went out on to the verandah to investigate. The sun was shining on the edge of an enormous white cloud which descended from his whereabouts in the sky right into the depths of the valley under us. As the sun sank towards the invisible mountain-tops the cloud became filled with more and more of his glory, and to our astonishment we had a sunset beneath our feet—the whole valley filled with cloud shining with an intense golden glory, against which the trees in our foreground stood out like writing upon a golden page. Then just as his rim touched a mountain-top the sun burst through the cloud and shone with unparalleled lustre—the effect of the rain-washed air. We watched the orb sink. The rays forsook the valley and shot

upwards. This sunset and the phenomena which went before were the most remarkable we have seen in India. The clouds changed from gold to crimson, and there was an afterglow against which the mountains, now fully revealed, serrated themselves in mantles of indigo. Did the sun know that it was Peace Day?

An incident of our walk yesterday was rather amusing. Norah and I were threading the path through the forest on the way to our friends when we encountered some Muslim ladies seated upon rocks at either side of the path. With them was a servant who announced our coming. The ladies were clad in *burkas*, and in addition they had each an umbrella. The servant who kept her face uncovered announced the approach of a Man and all the tops of the umbrellas revolved towards me, and went round between me and the possessors of them as I passed by—just like revolving toadstools. Norah thought she knew one of the ladies, but was quite unable to make sure, under the circumstances.

A Mohamedan friend, whom we met farther on with two ladies in *burkas*, said that there were two things which would rapidly disappear in India—the purdah of the Muslims and the touch of the Hindus. The latter refers to the refusal of the Hindu to receive food from the hand of a Muslim. Norah went up to the two ladies who were resting upon a seat, but I steered carefully as far away from them as possible.

Have you any idea of the dignity in India of the Government officer known as a Deputy Commissioner? A friend of ours here has a fox terrier who recently flew at a friend of hers—a D.C.—and inserted three teeth in his thigh. Yesterday he was complaining humorously of the manners of the dog, whose mistress replied that her dog bit all bad characters, whether they were Deputy Commissioners or not. He now wears a muzzle. The dog.

AT A LUNCH-PARTY

26 July 1919

. . . The first five days of the forty of the Deluge must have resembled Dalhousie in the monsoon. I wonder if Noah had such clouds as ours. They pile themselves up on mountain-tops and horizons—wherever they can rest. They roof in valleys—usually at sunset time—and then in the night we have thunder and lightning and downpour.

In spite of the rains we have been quite gay. Upon our most dissipated day we went out to lunch, and to tea elsewhere. At the luncheon-party our hostess told the story of a certain lady meeting a man whom she thought she knew in Mool Chand's shop at Lahore. "Are you going to this dreadful wedding to-morrow?" she asked. "Yes," he replied. "I'm the bridegroom." The wedding was dreadful to the lady because it was the second marriage of the bride, and a scandal was in the offing.

At the tea-party that followed, all the women (and the father concerned) were absorbed in admiration of a baby who was shortly to go out in her perambulator. Norah took the infant in her arms—and it howled! Meanwhile the tea-party was not getting on, which made me impatient. "It's not half so beautiful a child as I was at that age," I volunteered. Then I was asked by Norah to adore the grey kitten that was looking so beautiful on her

purple dress. I observed, coldly, that I had often seen a kitten before. "We can show him nothing in which he can take any interest," said the hostess. Cigarettes were handed round. "Do you smoke, Mrs. Richards?" "No," I replied, cutting in sharply. "She is not allowed to. I do not approve of women smoking!" In spite of my rude remarks the party proceeded pleasantly. Our host told us how he had tried to teach his wife to shoot. "There—aim at that," he had said, handing her a gun and showing her a dove in a tree. "Nobody could miss such a mark." So the lady fired; but the dove didn't wink an eyelash; but remained perfectly still after the report. "Oh, Charlie!" screamed the lady. "Shoot it, shoot it! It's pinned to the tree!" There sat our hostess, laughing at herself. "The last thing in the world I wanted to do was to kill it!" As we were leaving, addressing me, she said, "You always look at me as if you think I'm not all there." "Oh, Mrs. X," said I. "What a foundation for a good understanding between us."

These people have a charm not possible to convey in a letter.

BLAST IT!

To EDITH

1 Aug. 1919

. . . *Blast it!* Somehow I feel like that. I do not quite know what it expresses, but it soothes me to have said it. If I met you anywhere I feel sure I should swear at you—if the Madre were not there—not with anger of course. Many other feelings besides anger express themselves with swear-words. . . . “If I met you” is a delicious condition. I could almost write a novel about it, or at least a chapter of a novel. Which reminds me—I have just read *Jamesie* by Ethel Sidgwick. I don’t advise you to read it unless you have time to be tantalized. It is baffling, but clever. What a lot of cleverness there is in women. And how it comes out in novels. *First the Blade* by Clemence Dane has charm. *Tasker Jevans* (May Sinclair) is all I know of its writer. It tells of a man of genius who is never shown as a genius, except at the last, in his fears about the war. It is a clever book for the amusement of a dull day. Norah and I have found two novels we think very good, both from the artistic point of view and from that of good sense. They are *The Green Mirror* (Hugh Walpole) and *Round the Corner* (Gilbert Cannan). If you can read only one of these, take the latter. That book’s a charter—and its art as well. Perhaps you know it. Charles Marriott and

Leonard Merrick are also good men. But of them all, give me Dostoevsky, much of whom for me is unreadable, but *The Brothers Karamazov*—great. This novel and *The Green Mirror* and *Round the Corner* differ from the mass, inasmuch as their subject is human life and not the feelings of a pair of lovers. I am the disciple of many of these writers—men and women—who express themselves about everything under the sun in fiction.

There's a woman up here who rushed us—said she had heard a lot about us and was determined that we were the sort of people for her. What she had heard was not all praise, but the criticism only confirmed her opinion! A distinguished academic person—a Cambridge First, an enthusiast for psycho-analysis; a glory in the lecture-room and in conversation—with concentrated intellect flaming on her forehead. She told me more about myself than I ever knew—in fact some folk fight shy of her because of her uncanny but scientific insight. She knows more psychology than is printed in books. Not in the least a prig, she is a "straightener" of the type portrayed in *Erewhon* or some other of Butler's fantasies. She can drive out devils; or, in plain English, cure people of fear, or hysteria, or bad habits—by getting at their reason. Her bold and daring manners which some folk resent; her emotions kept as much upon her sleeve as possible—out of personal inclination and scientific justification—do not obscure the extraordinary merits of the lady,

who is 45 years old and unmarried: frankly regretting her virginity. She knows all birds by sight and name; flowers ditto; kissed frogs when she was a girl; and loves everything except snakes. Vows that neurotics may be the salt of the earth—discovered that Norah was saved from being neurotic by Art. A person who can tell you what you are, what is pulling you back, how you can get forward. I marvel at her.

PURDAH LADIES

3 August 1919

DEAR MADRE,

How did the birthday go? How did you spend it? We had torrents of rain, and got wet through going to a tea-party. We turned back because it was impossible to drink tea with one's shoes full of water. A cone fire in the cottage and a change of clothes soon put matters right again.

I wish I could draw a picture of one of our neighbours—a Mohamedan gentleman proceeding along the hill path at the head of his household of women, in *burkas*—white linen overalls with grilles for the eyes. About nine of them—all marching in Indian file. Such conversation as is held takes place over the shoulder. The leader twists his head over his neck and flings behind him scraps of wisdom. "Civilization does not give happiness." A moment after, "Money does not give happiness." The remarks are handed along the line. When the wind volumes the *burkas*, there is a picture!

One day, some of these ladies walking with the grilles raised, met an Englishwoman on horseback. The horsewoman was wearing riding-breeches, and was taken to be a man. Instantly down went all the grilles. Several times this salute has been given in my honour. These ladies must think me a nuisance.

Yesterday I saw a Deaconess (with whom I was

not acquainted) struggling up our hill with a waterproof on one arm, carrying a basket containing a bottle and other contents, and an umbrella upon the other. The Deaconess, who was white-haired, paused for breath. In two seconds I had proposed to carry her basket, and had got possession of it. I carried it, and, by and by, the waterproof right up the hill, and we had a pleasant chat. This of course would have been scandalous and impossible to the *burka* ladies. But imagine the reputation I have created for myself in the tea circles of Dalhousie. "Such a nice man!" The Deaconess belongs to the Deaconess's House next door to the Cathedral in Lahore: the head of which is an aristocrat of the good old sort: very refined and intelligent and human. We are going to stand very well with the Deaconesses in future!

This funny old cottage has a slate roof under which sacking is spread and whitewashed for a ceiling. Between the slates and the sacking rats swarm and make a tremendous noise in the night, fighting and gnawing. We thought a man had got in last night.

In a fortnight or so we shall be going down. We have booked tonga and motor, but there is nothing but news of breakdowns on the road, hence we may have a difficult descent. *And* it may rain! The tryingest point of the journey is Dunera—half-way. The village is in a narrow depth where you change tonga for the motor. It is like an oven, and the heat after the cool up here sometimes alters one's physical

and moral nature for a couple of months afterwards. There is a slovenly rest-house with an extraordinary machine, called the thermantidote, for cooling the rooms. It is never used.

Hot or cold, wet or fine—love to you from us both.
E.

GENEROUS INSPIRATION

To EDITH

6 Sept. 1919

. . . I wonder why the devil—I exclaimed.

Don't be excited—Norah interrupted.

Why the devil that child doesn't send along those papers I asked for—I continued. . . .

When your stories are printed it will be expensive for you, since I shall want copies. The damned silly N.S. rejected my essays, and prints every week Tosh—in comparison with which I am the height of literature. How hard it is for Merit to win Recognition.

By the way, I simply dote on *A Chair in the Boulevard—While Paris Laughed—Conrad in Quest of His Youth*—by Leonard Merrick. What invention! What mirth! What a sound heart and mind!

You are right about Mother. She is best off where she is, for the present. Since you have been with her, her letters have been jolly. The grandchildren do her good. No doubt they are an improvement upon anything that the family has done before. . . . But if you heard Norah talk about me—only modesty prevents me from being explicit—it would be a surprise for you. Most men who are charming to the world lack charm to their wives; but I am quite content to have it the other way about in my case.

Generous inspiration—you want a hero for a romance—why not take me? As an emotion remembered in tranquillity, and by distance made more sweet, I am a rich eligibility.

A SNAKE

25 Sept. 1919

DEAR MADRE,

My study has been closed for a few days because of a snake which lives in a hole in it. I stepped out of the door one night on to the verandah and almost on to the snake, which lay coiled up six inches from the door and six inches from my foot. It was a black and silver specimen three feet long or less. As soon as I was on the verandah, it straightened itself and glided into the study and went down a hole in one corner. Probably it has a wife and family down there. The house was neglected by its late occupants, with the result that holes were allowed—and snakes.

I get the news that Edith is leaving you. She and the children were evidently a boon. Perhaps they can come again at Xmas and help the winter to pass. Not that I want time to fly with you. Let it go gently, but not drag.

YOU AMIABLE ENGLISH!

6 Oct. 1919

Poor Norah has such a cold! I had mine a fortnight ago. I can hear her sniffs from the next room although I am sitting here in my study to be as far away from her as possible. She might be infectious!

You appear to be engaged in civil war over there, you amiable English! The news is just published here of the call for a citizen army. What the railwaymen have to say for themselves, if they have anything at all, is not sent over the wires. On the face of it, the strike looks criminal.

Well, the rich folk who are making large profits are just as guilty as any of the railway workers. The shareholders who run railways for dividends are no more patriotic in their attitude to the railways than the workers: so they ought to have grace enough not to throw stones.

When I write politics, it is a sign that I have no news!

A DOMESTIC EVENT

13 Oct. 1919

So your railway strike is settled: and the fun of it is that all of you seem to be congratulating yourselves—Government, nation, and strikers, upon a prodigious moral victory! Lloyd George must indeed be a clever fellow if he can persuade everybody that he has won.

Lots of people in Lahore are having fever. Norah and I have been lucky enough to escape with bad colds. A friend of ours was $105\cdot9^{\circ}$ yesterday. When we arrived to tea with her—she was in bed with apologies! Much of it is sandfly fever. Now, the sandfly is smaller than the mosquito, he has a pale tiny yellow body, and his wings are transparent—so that he is invisible. His bite is very irritating and his flight is swift. You can generally kill the mosquito who alights upon you, but the death of a sandfly is a domestic event.

We had the word “bran” in class the other day. What is *bran*? asks a student. I give them the Urdu word which sounds like *chokrr*, and I add that my horse always says *Chokrr!* when he is hungry. One of the students turned to me and asked quite seriously, Does your *horse* say that?

There was fun over the word *changeling*. A changeling, I explained, is an ugly child left by the fairies in place of a beautiful child which they have stolen

out of its cradle. I added : *I am a changeling!* This time the class laughed very heartily.

Every morning before breakfast behold me chopping up branches of trees—which we have had to cut off—for pea and sweet-pea sticks. Norah got a furious lot of sweet-peas, which she is planting galore. We ought to have a blaze next spring by the time the orange blossoms are out. I never had so many oranges and lemons and limes in my life. The garden keeps us constantly supplied: and this morning a basket full of sweet limes—with leaves attached to them—went nestling under a big banana leaf to our friend who is “sick of a fever.”

CHOPS WOOD

27 Oct. 1919

. . . Norah and I both get up early and go to work in the garden. She plants seeds; I chop wood. I have made quite a stack of firewood for the winter, out of the trees we have cut down and branches we have lopped off; besides a pile of brushwood for preliminary kindlings and encouragements—and any number of pea-sticks. The exercise has induced a glorious bodily tone. After swinging an axe over my head for half an hour, I walk like Mr. Gladstone.

It's a pity we cannot share with you our abundance of fruit. The bananas we pluck green, to ripen in a box full of leaves. They are nearly as long as this sheet of paper. As for the oranges—they are at present green spheres—you never saw such glorious ornaments in the midst of the deepest of green foliage. Some are changing colour. Lemons galore—several varieties. If the aerial post were operating, we might send you a hamperful—labelled bombs. When a friend falls ill, the daintiest basketful of fruit goes off in the carriage hugged against a white dress!

GOING HOME?

17 Nov. 1919

. . . Norah and I are beginning to consider the possibility of paying you a visit in the vacation of 1921. . . . We are seriously thinking about it.

It was very cold this morning, with either a very white dew or our first frost upon the grass. The trees held depths of misty colour in the increasing sunlight. Lahore is at its best just now. Every day is unclouded, with tolerable heat at noon.

The enclosure is an official announcement that I and two college principals are placed in charge of the University Library, during the forthcoming furlough of the Registrar. I once gazed with awe upon the University Librarian at the Bodlean. Little did I imagine that one day I should be, even for a brief period, one third as big a man as he, in a similar but lesser institution!

Don't let our possible visit next year—no, not next year, my mistake, 1921—influence you with regard to remaining on in 5 Heavitree Park. If you are in Exeter and Edith in London, she must come to us or we must go to *she* part of the time. At any rate we must see a bit of London. We should also go to Holland, to Halifax and Walsall; and Bournemouth would cry out for a glimpse.

WE MORTALS

20 Nov. 1919

. . . Christmas greetings from Norah and me! I suppose you will have a Christmas fire in spite of the hard times; and perhaps—a fowl! Or if Edith, the children and B. are with you, perhaps—a turkey! I hope you won't be all by yourself.

The photograph came a few days ago. The more I look at our family, the more beautiful I think they are. Your vivid old face has a kind of fire in it which reminds me tremendously of Granny in Southampton. Edith's dress with its open neck is admirable. As for B. and the boys—are they as good-looking as all that? What tender things we mortals are: how simple and how deep. What a freight of hopes, and fears, and loves, and worries, and trifles, and big questions we carry about with us. How joy and terror may appear and disappear! How a child may be a child and think childhood lasts for ever; and yet it grows up into a man, and helps to carry on a world—learns that there is such a thing as responsibility.

These are the silly ideas that throng into my mind with lots of vague yearnings when I look at this picture of all of you, on your little island drifting along together upon a big sea. The part which Edith has played in the making of future citizens must

often astonish her. I seem to have left at home some sort of a sister, and find now—a woman.

I am sorry for her headaches. What is the cause of them? Does she overwork? Does she sit too long over her writing? If she does tell her to keep warm feet.

I am interested and excited about her story-writing. More power to her elbow! Life is a wonderful thing, though of no more substance than a spider's web, and if she can catch a gleam in a tale of the wonder of life—why even the attempt is worth the making.

I am writing busily just now. I have an offer of £33 6s. 8d. for an English Grammar, and so I have turned grammarian, and I think I never undertook so teasing a task. In the first place I have to learn grammar all over again! In the second place all the ways of teaching and the technical terms have been altered since I was a schoolboy. In the third place, the Punjabi schoolboy has to be considered. One has to find hundreds of examples of sentences to illustrate the book, and I am always trying to make the sentences interesting by inventing something funny. "Feathered fish are rare" for instance, to illustrate adjectives or predicates, so that I ruin the serious appearance of the book! It is not easy to be a grammarian.

You must tuck your toes up by the fire on Xmas day and read a very nice book—fairy stories or mathematics, whichever you prefer—and be sweetly

happy and content. Give yourself a holiday! Of course one should have a holiday from oneself as well as from all ordinary affairs. One should do something one seldom does, put on a dress one never wears, eat what one never eats, and be the person one never was. Why not write poetry or think about *lightning-conductors or something equally unusual*? I think the best thing *I* can do on Xmas Day will be to go on being a grammarian.

CHILD-STUDY

26 Nov. 1919

. . . I notice that the more awful personal prerogatives I can assume, the better I get on as a professor. Men estimate you not for what you are, but for what you feel you are; or rather, for what you can make them feel you are. . . .

I am interested in the child-study classes. No doubt you indulge in reminiscences of my pleasing childhood. "When a baby cries," I can hear you saying, "look for a dirty milk-bottle, or a pin. I remember my dear eldest son's sitting upon a pin, and the effect it had upon his emotion." Make whatever use of me you like. "Slapping," you might say, "is equally good for the circulation and the character. Therefore I advise you young mothers to practise it. My dear eldest son would not now be such a person as he is had I not slapped him with a harshness increasing with his growth." (You dear old humbug, you never slapped me at all.) But call attention to another aspect of the subject—that children should study parents as well as vice versa: that parents after all are more wonderful and complicated and unintelligible and contrary than children! "Many a mother's temper has been spoilt by her child." How sad! But you may add that neither I nor *even Edith* robbed you of one ray of your charm!

Very feathery thrushes are knocking down the

wasps' nests in our orange-trees and devouring the frozen wasps. What a fate! Fancy being destined to vanish from the sunshine in the dark maw of a *very* feathery thrush. Such a good-humoured fate as it looks, however, to those who need not anticipate it!

IRONY

To EDITH

26 Nov. 1919

. . . I lost my temper in class this morning, but kept it marvellously all the same. I was tired this morning. We opened *Sesame and Lilies*—a difficult book—and I read out two easy sentences and proceeded to a third. A student interrupted with a request that I would explain every sentence. I went back over the two easy ones and finished the paragraph, laboriously explaining the simplest points with ironical intention, and at the end I said ironically "Is everything clear?" The student answered with entire gravity, "Please read more slowly."

Then a big fellow, who hopes to be a B.A. this time two years, asked, "When may I come to you with my difficulties?" I was at that moment signing a recommendation and busy with some other work—and tired. The big student said rudely in class a few days before: "That is your opinion" when I illustrated a sentiment in a book that there were bad writers who were popular, by quoting the name of Marie Corelli. "That is your opinion," said this fellow, who did not wish to offend, but simply did not know that his professor's opinion was more valuable than his own. I remembered also that he had brought me before some perfectly baby diffi-

culties when I could have been better employed. So I earned the reputation of a harsh, unsympathetic man by saying "*Work at your difficulties!*" Marie C., by the way, is extraordinarily popular among Indian students, and so are hosts of writers even less noteworthy who are never even heard of in England. And so are all sorts of books with titles like *The Mysteries of London* and *Paris Night Birds*.

A propos of difficulties, here is a true story. We were reading Tennyson—"The Passing of Arthur."

By these
Three Queens with crowns of gold:

I explained the Three Queens, and passed on. Up jumps a student: "Sir, you have not explained 'with crowns of gold!'" However, the rest laughed at him.

Our house and garden make life a new thing here.

Norah and I, by the way, are thinking of trying for a vacation in England in 1921. That's a long time off, and goodness knows what might happen between now and then. I hope we shan't have any more insurrections. The opinion gaining ground here is that it was a Bolshevik business. There are good and bad Bolsheviks. We get hold of the worst sort.

MOHAMEDANS KICK UP A DUST

12 December 1919

The Mohamedans here have begun to kick up a dust about the Peace Terms with Turkey, dragging their religious feelings into the matter. In defiance of reason and humanity they object to the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire. Their pride is attached to the longevity of a government which periodically massacred Macedonians, Armenians, etc., and rendered Mesopot desolate. Sentiment obliges them to protest against the Peace Terms—which are unknown—and to say their religion obliges them to do so. Fancy entangling your religion with a system of things very rightly detested all over Europe. The students of our College revolted against the College rule which forbade them to attend political meetings and went off I believe in considerable numbers to a meeting about the Peace Terms which they said was a religious meeting. We have had an exceedingly difficult time with an outburst of fanatical feeling in the College. One little lunatic rushed about the place with only the whites of his eyes showing, and shouting Islam!

Glad to hear you are going to join Edith for Xmas. Glad you are not going to be alone.

I went a walk this afternoon in the Lawrence Gardens simply to look at the trees. It was such a day as we seldom get in Lahore, great white clouds

flashing back the sun and making the sky, if truth must be told, more interesting than the eternal dome of blue. From the Latin names upon some of the trees I seem to have made the discovery that the India-rubber tree is a fig-tree. It is called *Ficus Elastica*. Some of the loftiest trees are the Eucalyptus. I paraded the paths and the grassy lawns like a philosopher, and felt rather like another Chignell¹ looking at the trees in another Heavitree Park.

Well—I must return to my Grammar not for the sake of the £33 6s. 8d., but because I have undertaken to do it!

A happy New Year!

¹ Thomas William Chignell, Minister at Georges Chapel, Exeter, for forty years. He lived in Heavitree.

HIS GRAMMAR

22 Dec. 1919

. . . I am still working like a fury at my Grammar. My thoughts do not flow upon this subject: I rarely ever see an inch ahead: I write a paragraph and an exercise and wonder what next. People who are constantly teaching grammar must have queer minds through which processions are always marching of Nouns and Prepositions and Complements or Adverbial Clauses. No such Lord Mayor's gaudy day passes through my mind!

Norah has been in bed three days with a cold. She has been very good. I went out to dinner on Saturday evening and locked her in her room on the roof. Friends are leaving Lahore on furlough and asked us to dine with them at a hotel on their last night. Norah of course couldn't go. The host was at the hotel before the hostess. They have a house please understand, but professed not to be able to dine on packing-cases. When Mrs. Hostess's motor was heard, mine Host went to meet her; and the lady came into the room saying, "I'm quite topsyturvy! I am asking guests to dine in a hotel and Alfred has just met me and said 'How d'you do! I am so glad you have been able to come!'"

Picture us on Boxing Day on our roof, looking at the horse-races going on a few hundred yards away from us. I never go to horse-races, so horse-

ances come to me. There has been a still more remarkable instance of concession to immovability in the life of the prophet Mohamet.

On Xmas Day we shall think of you. The Martins and Dr. Haegert will be dining with us.

The Holdens, who never wrote to us all through the war, have written at last, because it is the season for remembrance—and because the world is at peace. It was pleasant to hear again.

QUESTIONS AND A VOW

31 December 1919

. . . Where shall we be in 2020? Who will be writing to his mother then from India? I ask these questions because this is a question-paper—I have been setting papers—but I do not expect to give any marks for them. They are unanswerable. What will have become of the Islamia College? (that is of no importance). Will the British still be in India? That is of more importance to India than to us perhaps.

A very large swarm of bees has settled on one of our upstairs windows—been there since yesterday. I heard a hum and saw a cloud and two black patches on the window—bees. All the edge of the roof parapet was black with them and all the corner of the house. What blundering bee-queen, not worthy of a vote, led her community into such a questionable situation?

I am snatching half an hour to write—it amounts to that—from my Grammar. Never will I write grammar again as long as I live—which is not quite so rash a vow as it looks. Do you ever write grammar? which is really not an impertinent question. I mean a Grammar. How many nouns make an adjective? Which is the most active verb of them all? How can *to idle* be an active verb? The sentence I like best in my book is “The laughter-loving

lioness laughed again." Can't you see her? I wish she would eat schoolboys—but no I don't—not because I am tender-hearted, but because after all, one day it will be profitable to have written the Grammar.

When I want a light task at some future date, I shall write a Dictionary.

There is a sense of harmony about the idea of following up a Grammar with a Dictionary that pleases me. I evidently have a sense of the fitting. Even my amusements are gigantic like my tasks. Recently I cut down about 100 banana palms. Now I am cutting them *up*. Not to burn. They are mere sap and fibre, but to dry. When they have dried up, they will be mere threads and then we can place them on a bonfire, and that will be the last of them. They were cut down because they were keeping the sun off more valuable trees in this crowded garden.

What is the value of £100 in England now? Is it worth £50? Prices I think won't go down with you until you have less paper money, and by paper money I think the War Loans are intended. That enormous debt, somehow, unless I am altogether bewildered, helps to raise the prices in addition to the shortage of everything. Hence Parliament ought to tackle the debt, and make the rich give up a great deal of their money, just as both rich and poor have been required to give up their lives—for their country. A tax on capital of some sort is coming—or a confisca-

tion of capital—as soon as you have a courageous Parliament. From what we see over here, Parliament seems pretty dilatory, though it has been prompt and probably wise with regard to India.

I wish you a Happy New Year!

1920

AMRITSAR CONGRESS

*To HIS MOTHER**5 Jan'y. 1920*

. . . What the future of this country is to be, and what the future of the English here, is on the knees of the gods just now. The bitterness of the Amritsar Congress—only partly justified by the one idea of General Dyer—is not a sign of dignity or political sense. . . . However, some sort of political change had become inevitable. . . .

The Oriental parts of the British Empire are a great responsibility, and a weakness. Nevertheless, for our mutual benefit we should remain unsevered. The Amritsar Congress betrayed very little perception of the benefit of the connection with Britain. . . .

I hope you are well and jolly.

DING-DONG!

12 Jan. 1920

What weather we are having to-day! It began with a catastrophic change in my liver. I wondered what the Dickens was souring my temper. Then came the rain. The garden was all puddles in no time. It will be good for the crops. These winter rains are far more beneficial than the summer ones, except that the latter feed the rivers which help to irrigate the Punjab.

Also we had another earthquake. Quite a small one, but it rattled our dining-room door; and the cat, who was dining with us, sprang up and spat at the door as at an enemy.

I am still at work on that interminable Grammar. But you had enough of grammar in my last. I am now writing model dialogues for kids to read out in school. By reading aloud model conversations—the whole class together—they are supposed to din things into them. Thank Heaven I am not a kid, particularly an Indian kid. In Indian schools it is nothing but loud repetition of the multiplication table—ding-dong—and other things, under the charge of teachers mostly incompetent.

The Amritsar affair was the deed of a man with one idea—that his orders had been disobeyed, and that he must do what he had threatened to do. Everybody almost, regrets it; and yet the defenders

are probably quite right in saying that the deaths there must have saved the lives of thousands elsewhere. Fools sometimes rush in where angels fear to tread; and this kind of folly sometimes has its uses. Nevertheless I shall not be surprised if the Commission sits heavily on General Dyer.

Norah is trying to indulge in a stiff neck on account of the weather, to show that she is as sensitive as I am to sudden changes in our climate.

A SPADE

19 Jan'y. 1920

. . . The last time the postman came with the English mail, there was no letter from you. Ah! I said to myself, she is ill. Then I tried to joke myself out of this by saying: She is writing a Grammar! And then I thought that after all, it might be she was too busy or preoccupied in the rather crowded but happy little house in Hampstead. Of course I was right.

This handwriting is written, so to speak, with a spade. I am just in from the garden, where I have been furiously digging at the roots of the banana palms which I cut down recently. It was heavy work, and my hand still trembles with it. But it has sweetened my temper. After I went to sleep in my chair this afternoon, I was inclined to be snappy. Norah always wakes up from a day-sleep like an angel—but I feel as if I owe all the world a grudge. This sensation I can expel with a spade.

There is nothing like impudence! If you send me a birthday present this year, send me one number—I don't mind which—of the new London monthly, *Mercury*. I want to see if the sort of stuff I have been writing might have a chance of acceptance there. As soon as I have got rid of the Grammar, I shall turn man of letters again.

Partly in order to save money, and partly because

Norah was not very well in rainy Dalhousie last long vacation, we are thinking of spending the hot weather here. With constant exercise in the garden I might be able to manage it; and as for Norah, the hot weather seems to suit her. But we have talked like this before, and found our hearts fail us when the time arrived, and they may fail yet once more.

MOODS AND EVENTS

23 Jan. 1920

. . . I have finished the Grammar. All but the Preface. But perhaps there will be none. Nevertheless, a preface is good policy, because an author in it can say what a wonderful book he has made, and what are the superior advantages enjoyed by the fortunate users of this book! I am not in the mood to write a preface this morning, and since I am probably sending away the MS., perhaps it will never be written. How many of our decisions, and how many events, depend upon our moods!

The jubilee number of *Nature* has fallen into my hands. It presents a portrait of Norman Lockyer, the founder and editor. Here is the man who found something in the sun before it had been found on the earth. Surely a wonderful fellow—far more wonderful than he looks. But I think he looks wonderful. Many articles in the paper review the progress of science in many different branches during the last fifty years. I do not understand one-eighth of any article, but I have read them all, and derived a deep sense of satisfaction—joy, I might say. Here are men who have something to live for, and who have much to show for what they have been doing. They are the best sort of men in the world, and the world ought to belong to them, and not to Prussians or Bolsheviki or

Indian extremists. But poor humanity is far behind its leaders. Nevertheless, the world is worth living in for the sake of Science—and Literature—and all the other Arts.

The *Strand Magazine* I have also been reading—because I like things mixed—with admiration here and there for a well-told story and a good deal of contempt for failures in story-telling. What kind of stories is Edith writing? But perhaps she keeps her eggs hidden until they are hatched, like a sensible hen.

NO NEWS BUT MEWS

2 Feb. 1920

. . . Spring seems to have stirred up our Cat and reminded him that he is not the demure domesticated creature which he had so long appeared to be. He remembers that he is related to Cat-society as well as to our household, and that it is his duty to fight every other male cat—particularly such as intrude into our garden. There was a Kilkenny sort of business on our verandah this afternoon, and the defeated stranger took refuge in the dining-room! Our cat swore so dreadfully at the stranger that his mew afterwards was reduced by hoarseness to the comically smallest proportions. Norah went out with a plate of meat to entice him in from the garden; but the Beast, whom we had begun to fancy was almost human—it surprised me sometimes to see him walking about on four legs and exhibiting an unmistakable tail—this Beast was so far gone back into Cat that he was not to be cajoled by the tender, entreating, deploring, sympathetic voice.

Having no news, I supply mews.

How an animal can be content to be an animal in such a world as this where the preachers are continually exhorting us to Aspire, I do not know. I argue that our Cat is not waterproof to human influences, and at times I have thought I had seen

the Cat's soul getting too large for his body. A desire for expression—usually of ecstasy—seemed to have confronted him with a sense of his own limitations. I almost looked for a transformation, or some sort of transmigration. "Lift your mind," I imagined Pussy saying to himself, "up to the Monkey." But now Pussy has backslided. To-morrow I suppose he will turn up with a scratched nose, and no sign of penitence. The moral I draw from Pussy is that it is not so easy as we think for you and me to escape from the human into the angel. Or shall I quote Goethe: *There is a law which prevents the trees from growing up into the sky.*

IMPORTUNANCE

16 Feb. 1920

. . . The Martins have sailed for England, and I am in charge of the College. At Bombay they found all the hotels crammed, and had to put up in a special hostel for Homeward-bound Europeans, constructed by Cook & Son out of a war hospital. Martin's bed was one of 90 in the male ward, and when he woke up in the morning he looked round for his nurse!

My first act as Principal has been to stop about a dozen boys who have done badly in the House Exam. from entering the University Exam. The consequence is I have had visits and appeals. One boy went down on his knees and touched my feet. This is the great impediment of every kind of Government in India. The European manages to resist importunities against discipline, but the Indian invariably collapses under the strain. Read once more the parable of the Importunate Widow; and remember the conclusion to the story of Joseph and his brothers—forgiveness! Think also of the man who was woken up for bread in the middle of the night. It has not been quite so bad as that with me; but Martin, in former years, has had people camping out on his bungalow verandah for hours.

Students gave a farewell party to the Martins on the day before they went. It was a pleasant

affair. The invitation cards were sent out in the name of the Indian senior professor. There is a little band of students irreconcilable to Martin—and perhaps to me—over the *Khilafat* question. These fellows wrote to sundry of the invited guests saying the party was cancelled! Other students found it out and went round to say the party was not cancelled. So we jog along.

ACTING-PRINCIPAL

24 Feb. 1920

DEAR EDITH,

This letter may hit somewhere about your birthday. Many happy returns. Perhaps you will write a story on that day which will be the beginning of getting into print.

Meanwhile, I am acting as Principal of the College for six months while Martin is away. The kind of problem I have to settle is this: Two boys quarrel in boats down on the river Ravi. One swears the other is threatening him and asks me to stop it. The other protests innocence and aggression on the other side. Solution: caution number 2. Or again—A. is keeper of accounts in his boarding-house kitchen which has 40 members. 18 members complain that their committee of four is not allowed to see the accounts. A. says he will allow the whole 18 to see the accounts individually, but a committee will waste his time. Provisional solution: send the 18 one by one to inspect the books, and secretly hope they will waste A.'s time as much as they and he have wasted mine.

At the same moment this morning I had a book-seller appealing to me because the College committee has not paid his bill; a consultation with the Boarding House superintendent; two students waiting with English essays; and a fellow at my elbow

asking if he could bring a heavy machine across our football field because he was afraid 8 oxen could not draw it up a bank.

In the background we always have possibilities of the *Khilafat* business—political and religious agitation, etc. to keep us on the *qui vive*. Fortunately, half the College is shortly going in for University examinations; and this has a sobering effect.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

To HIS MOTHER

4 March 1920

. . . The Devil is in the Archbishop of Canterbury to go proposing to upset the arrangements about Constantinople. All the Mussalmans see in this suggestion the animus of a Christian priest against Islam, with the consequence that mass meetings are being held all over India and resolutions are passed threatening the Government with disloyalty if Islam does not get just what she wants, etc. Of course, Students *will* go to these meetings—there was one yesterday outside a city gate, just half a mile from the College—the Koran was recited by one of our students—and for aught I know they may be one day proposing to carry such a resolution in the College itself. I should forbid it; and then there would be a strike. You can judge therefore that I have material for thought. These are the most exciting days hitherto in the history of the College; and I am so inexperienced that it takes me a long time to find a decision I know to be wise; and in a hurry one day, the wrong word might be spoken. Fortunately things have gone up to the present very smoothly.

This morning I woke up with the words of a dream in my brain: *She is the kind of fairy who sits under the pleasantest blade of grass.* Norah is now in

this garden (where I write) cutting sweet-peas and roses; and so I suppose the dream was a sort of prophecy. Overhead fly two birds—sapphire above, bronze beneath and a long feather poking out of their tails. They are bee-suckers I believe. Behind me comes a smell of honey from two plum-trees as thick as hoar-frost with blossom, and the hum of the bees who are busy among the branches. Parrots are making their own peculiar noises, and some other birds*are warbling—almost as if one was in an English copse. This is just the best time of the year in the Punjab. The cold has gone, the heat has not yet arrived. The sun is still a pleasant companion.

My Grammar has just been returned to me by the publisher to have certain pages of advice to teachers added to it. This I am told will make it more popular with teachers. Now I know so little of schoolmastering, that I carefully omitted putting in my advice. However, I have got to do it. The consequence is that I have got from libraries several books for schoolmasters by educational experts, whose recommendations I am going to quote or present in my own words. It is quite interesting! Also I have visited one of the city schools, and seen some of the methods. You never know what will be the end of things when you begin to write a Grammar.

I am now busy writing the Annual Report for the prize-giving; which, by the way, is hung up

because I do not get an answer from a learned Mussalman judge to whom I wrote asking him to preside. I have also to prepare the college prospectus, which must be ready by the end of the Matric Exam.—in print. They are exceedingly busy days I spend nowadays!

KHILAFAT TROUBLE

17 March 1920

. . . Certain mischievous persons have stirred up many of our students into a very troublesome temper over the *Khilafat* question. Last Friday night the newspapers announced that the Allies' battleships were going to Constantinople. Immediately the students in our largest hostel declared a fast, and resolved to hold a meeting in the College Hall at 9.30 the next morning instead of going to their classes. My permission was not asked. I knew nothing of it until at 9 on Saturday, when a student came to the bungalow for a recommendation, and incidentally mentioned the affair. I drove down to the College expecting to find it in rebellion, and I did. When the bell rang for beginning work at 9.30 a.m., the students instead of going to their classrooms marched into the Hall. I went into the Hall—in my gown—to speak to them. They rose respectfully. Then I asked them who had given permission for the meeting. Silence. I had to decide whether to permit or forbid the meeting, and since they had made a religious affair of it, and would have held the meeting in defiance of me, I said they should have it. This decision is accepted by all persons as the only possible or wise one under the circumstances. So I retired into my office after a short speech aimed at putting the students into some

better kind of humour—Useless! A junior member of the staff was put in the chair, and made an inflammatory speech. A poem followed, reciting the wrongs of the East at the hands of the West. This occasioned extraordinary hysterical weeping. They enjoyed themselves thoroughly. One student fainted, and was carried into the corridor. After sitting tight about an hour and a half to see if any work was possible that day, I drove off to see certain members of the Committee, and arrange for a meeting. Then I drove back to the College. The meeting was still going on, and I closed the College and left them at it—having to get home for lunch and back again to the Committee meeting.

The Committee have temporarily put an end to my anxieties by closing the College from 16th March to 26th. Therefore, during the *Hartal*, or closing of the shops on the 19th, the College will be closed. Most of the students have gone to their homes; a comparative handful, working for the coming exams, remain in the boarding-houses.

I had the College open for two days only after the meeting, and it was fairly quiet; but of course as long as the Turkish question remains unsolved we shall be liable to agitations.

Lucky Martin—to be at home in England out of it!

HOME *v.* COLLEGE*28 March 1920*

. . . So the photographs have conveyed an idea of magnificence! We meant to suggest pleasantness rather! Even Edith records the impression. I wish you had had tea with us this afternoon under the pomegranate-trees—the vine near us bursting into leaf and blossom; roses all round; the steps of the platform gay with a fiery ring of snapdragon and other flowers. *And* the green of the orange hedge, from which the blossom has just gone.

Everything is pleasant in the home. The worry is the College, which has reassembled; and for the present, quietly. But one never knows when the agitators outside will egg on the students to some fresh folly. Agitators are a confounded nuisance! but political troubles were only to be expected when the great changes began in India.

THE MAHARAJA OF DEVAPUR!

4 April 1920

. . . On Good Friday, Norah and I were resting after lunch, for the heat had tired us; when—Enter upon the verandah four Individual Indians—in white clothes, and a variety of picturesque headgear. “Now who on *earth*?” said I to myself, in no very genial spirit at being disturbed—when the chik opened in my hand—and lo and behold—the Maharaja of Devapur!—with his Diwan, his Private Secretary, and a Member of his Council! . . . The result of his visit was that we are to have Krishna back again some time this month! You can guess Norah is pleased!

. . . Now I have to write an article to explain that wild animals have no perceptions, in our sense of the word, because they have no poets.

Yours sincerely,

My dear Madame,

P. E. RICHARDS

(The above is a new habit—my style as Principal.)

COLLEGE SERMONS

11 April 1920

. . . The students at the College are going on very quietly just now. There are mischief-makers at work, however, trying to stir up trouble about the College sermons, which I dare say are dull. Certain students announced to one of the maulvis, or professional preachers, that if he didn't improve they wouldn't listen to him! The sermons, no doubt, are a farce, but the motive of the objectors is not a desire for improved or moral instruction; they simply want more excitement.

Do you believe in the wisdom of bees? A swarm built a comb in our bedroom window, and then abandoned it, finding the site ill-chosen. They migrated to a tall tree which overhangs the vine arbour, and here they built a comb 2 feet long and 1 foot deep from the branch, and about 2 inches thick in the thickest part. Yesterday we had a violent storm of wind, and this morning we found the comb on the ground, with numbers of dead bees about it. The ants have been busy all day, carrying off the dead bees.

Our little Prince has not yet appeared. We expect him some time towards the end of the month. Norah is looking forward to him immensely!

Our much love to you.

MRS. BINDRABAN

27 April, 1920

. . . Norah went visiting an Indian lady this morning, wife of a professor. Only a little girl visible, sunning clothes on a balcony; so Norah marches upstairs (it was a sort of flat). Outside a bedroom door, signs of occupation. Norah looks in: finds the lady in bed. "O dear Mrs. Bindraban, I am so sorry to find you ill. What is the matter with you?"—"I've got—I've got—" said the lady in her difficult English—"a little new baby!"—So she had—wrinkled like a walnut, wizened like an old man—six days old!

We were out to tea recently. Enter a one-armed man, a favourite of our hostess and her daughter, Sylvia. The one-armed man seemed to be looking at everything with his brains all the time—by the way in which he held his head. Sylvia kissed him upon the identical corner of his forehead which he habitually holds foremost and presents to the world. "Thank you, Sylvia," he said, "that was very nice; I enjoyed it very much." The deliberation of the utterance betrayed a character. It was Edmund Candler—a rather famous war-correspondent, and traveller, and writer about the East—as expert evidently in the things of peace as in those of war. Quite anecdotal—this letter.

We expect our Prince to arrive about 30 April.

ROSES AND HOOFS

30 April 1920

DEAR EDITH,

I have just been out of this little study of mine into the garden, and was almost burnt to a cinder. But the hot weather is not here yet. One of my discoveries was that the grass-cut—a fellow artistically adorned with nothing but a rag round his waist—a real jungly walla—had allowed the horse to trample off the grass on to the bed of rose-cuttings. I have watched about 400 rose-cuttings through the varying vicissitudes of cold, heat, and drought. I had not calculated upon horse-hoofs. In my heart I swore that I would buy a motor-car and discharge grass-cuts. But I knew I couldn't.

Perhaps Mother has let you see the letter in which I described the behaviour of the College upon the news of the occupation of Constantinople. Little by little the news of the distribution of the Turkish Empire among the European Powers is dribbling into the papers, and I am wondering not only how the College is going to behave, but the agitators and the mobs behind them. The wisest men say it will all end in words, because none of the provincial governments have checked anybody in his breathings of fire and slaughter. Had the agitation been checked there would have been an explosion long

ago : the course which the Government has adopted may have allowed just that hairbreadth chance to fall which may avert it.

It is a paradoxical situation at the College. I am *persona grata* with the students who nevertheless would hoot me if their fanatical feelings got well enough worked up and I happened to cross them. Hitherto I have behaved like the Government, and taken care not to cross them. In a day or two we shall be admitting two hundred students or more for the new session—all unknown personalities. We shall be carrying on four classes each a day through the hot weather. College opens at 6.30 a.m. by the way and closes at about 10 a.m. If tempers are short in the devilish heat, is it wonderful? If we don't blow up we shall carry on till about 20 June, when the Hills dawn in prospect. Our little Prince this year, who is coming back to us, will be going to Pachmarhi (pron. Puchmurry) in Central India, about 100 miles from Jubbulpore. It is not the Himalayas, but the Mahadeo Hills, about 4,000 feet. Some time in July we shall go to Devapur to take part in the durbar in the celebration of the Maharaja's birthday; and shall have the honour of dining in the palace. We shall travel the two days' journey from here to Pachmarhi in state—two reserved carriages—Prince and Norah and myself in one; his retinue in another, and half a dozen servants in an adjoining compartment. All this, of course, provided the land doesn't blow up. I don't

think it's likely to—but don't discuss this with the Mater.

I dreamt about Wilx last night—that he wept when he painted his pictures! For my own part I am quite willing to believe that he is painting pictures somewhere now, and even taking an interest in us. If anybody presses me, of course “I don't *know*,” but I have a mighty strong opinion that the world is a much more splendid affair than the waste of death seems to make of it. I refuse to be disallowed of my secret persuasion that I have relatives in the skies, and that I am altogether handsomely furnished as a spiritual creature.

Do you know the Persian verses:

They are calling to thee from the pinnacles of the throne
of God:

I know not what hath befallen thee in that dust-heap.

For my own part, I answer that I have been lamentably ill-educated in the dust-heap. Teach your boys real knowledge of all the fine arts, and science; and at least one modern language—and unless their genius pulls them that way, let Latin and Greek be damned. I mean they should be able to *talk* their language—French or Italian. Therefore they should go abroad. Why not you go with them to France for a year or two? By the exchange you could live cheaper in France than in England. Or perhaps you have educational plans of your own? You have never breathed a word on the subject.

I imagine B reading the top line of this page, and his expression!

I have read all the English books. Just imagine, if I could read French literature! I can't, because I don't know the real force of French words, even when I can translate them.

Do you remember that I knew a Barnstable boy called Arthur Cummings? His brother, Bruce Cummings, was the Barbellion whose *Journal of a Disappointed Man* seems to be a real book. I remember Bruce Cummings as a little pale slip of an eight-year-old with a precocious interest in natural history.

How is your story-telling going on?

Our love to you and B and the fractions.

E.

LAST MATRIC

1 May 1920

. . . The strange enclosure is my Matric paper, for which I am just about to receive Rs. 500 or £50 for examining which (as well as setting, of course, I mean). Norah happened to go into the telegraph office on the very day the Matric result was declared. The place was full of schoolboys with two telegram forms in each hand, wiring results to parents, uncles, friends, etc. Norah could not get to the counter, but made friends with one of the boys who, she said, could push. She gave him her telegram signed Richards—a dramatic moment: for lots of the boys realized that here was the wife of one of their phantom ogres.

It is probably the last time I examine for Matric. One has the appointment for five years—and my five have just been completed. It is thanks to Matric and private coaching that I am able to save a little. This house, the carriage, etc., and the annual move to the Hills actually cost me more than I earn from the College! What extravagance! But in the interests of health—so I doubt if it isn't the cheapest thing in the long run. Living for a European—especially for a woman—in India is expensive because the climate is so exacting.

The young Prince will more than compensate for the loss of the Matric. No Hill expenses for one thing

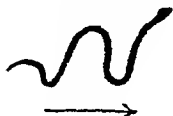
—all charges of house and travelling borne by the State. It is probable that we shall see an entirely different part of the Hills this year—Pachmarhi—in the Central Provinces—two days' journey.

The College has been behaving well since its outbreak, up to date; but since the Peace Terms are oozing out in the papers there is no knowing what we are to expect. If I have any trouble the College will be closed and we shall go to the Hills straight-away. The Indian agitators over the Peace Terms are doing their best to cause bloodshed: which has been avoided up to the present only by the wisdom of the Government. All officials out here are secretly horrified by the Genl. Dyer incident. The said General was a fool, and you must not saddle the Indian or the Punjab Government with the responsibility for him. Before the "massacre," he is said to have spent a considerable time on his knees, praying for guidance. An awful warning against prayer. However, this fool with his "massacre" probably saved more lives than a wiser and humaner man would have done!

OUR SNAKE

7 May 1920

. . . It was very hot and I wanted some exercise, so I said I would go and chop wood in the garden. One of our apple-trees has recently fallen down. Its root had been gnawed clean through by a rat, and when the garden was watered—flooded—from the canal, the ground got soft, and the tree fell down. Here were some fine logs to be chopped up; so I began to chop away, near our lime-bushes. I chopped for twenty minutes, and then I heard a rustling near by. Six feet away from me was a large snake making off towards the hedge—otherwise I should have bolted. I watched it fascinated. It was making a brushing noise as it went along in this form



flat on the ground. It was much more elegant in its coils than I have drawn. I thought it was 6 feet long, but we found afterwards it was 5 feet 6 inches. I went on chopping for some time, but every rustle of a leaf in the neighbourhood made me look round. Was it a cobra or what?

We learnt that the gardener had seen the snake the day before and bolted.

A few days afterwards the gardener was trimming

a hedge when he heard a rustle. There was our snake in the orange hedge, hanging like a ribbon, about 4 feet off the ground. The gardener shouted *Samp!* The bearer ran with a big stick, the coachman ran with ditto, the khansaman ran, the grass-cut ran. Norah too heard the shout and jumped up from her chair. I heard—Norah rushed out—I finished my paragraph! There was the snake, there were the men thrusting their poles towards the hedge, braced for action, but at a respectful distance. There was Norah, who said: "Bring your revolver." I said: "Suppose I miss!" Then Norah said she would call our neighbour who had a gun. She ran in the sun across the field (I meant to go instead of her! but she was too quick for me) and in two minutes was back with our neighbour and his double-barrelled gun. Bang went the gun; the snake writhed in the hedge, fell into the gutter below, which was full of water, and splashed the water about tremendously. He was pulled out with sticks, and continued wriggling and lashing although, as we found, his head was shot off.

His body was put in a flower-pot and taken with a note by the mali to another of our neighbours, an authority upon snakes. We wanted to know if it was poisonous. The question and answer and the dirt from the mali's hand are enclosed to finish this history.

Our love to you,
E.

DEAR DR. CALEB,

Shikar! Please tell us what sort of a snake it is. Mr. Cawnforth has just shot it.

Yours sincerely,

NORAH RICHARDS

DEAR MRS. RICHARDS,

Common or garden grass snake—*Zootis
Muscovus*—as harmless as a babe.

Sincerely yours.

C. CALEB

DELIGHTFUL POSSIBILITIES!

18 May 1920

The Turkish Peace Terms are out, but nevertheless the College has been so far well behaved. Perhaps the mischief-makers feel that in Lahore no respectable Mohamedan is supporting them, which is the fact. Or perhaps they are saving up for a little outbreak later on. The world is full of delightful possibilities.

Our little Prince hasn't arrived yet owing to sundry causes of delay. Perhaps we shan't see him until we go to the Hills. The railway strike may or may not interfere with his arrival.

On May 17 I was 45 years old! Why I have been in such a hurry to arrive at such a goal I cannot conceive. I shall certainly not live another 45 years—interesting reflection! Perhaps everybody ought to be executed, except the geniuses, at 45. What do you think?

We go to bed at 9, read for half an hour, and get up at 4.30 a.m. nowadays. You see College begins at 6.30, and I am half an hour's drive away. So I have to leave here at 6 a.m. One must have breakfast first, because (as far as my experience goes) it is impossible to rule firmly upon an empty stomach. Two hard-boiled eggs are sufficient.

The latest writer who delights me is Mrs. Meynell. She puts on airs in her *Hearts of Controversy*—is in other words a literary superior person—but

all the same has a tune, a music, and perceptions of her own. She is all perception. She is the sort of person, talk to whom would do more to polish the talker and bring out every bit of his best than going to a University. I haven't read her poems. . . .

Where would the writer be if *we* didn't enjoy him? After all *we* are the patrons of literature, *we* *mediocrities*. We decide whether the genius has expressed the truth or our own feelings: and if he has not, we whistle him down the wind.

This season is extraordinarily cool, so that several people sleeping out have been chilled and caught cold. Norah and I have been clever enough to escape so far.

Our love to you.

E.

There is little to say at the close of these pages.

He was struck down in a moment with acute enteric. At 9.30 in the morning (date unremembered) he took the chair at a Students' Meeting at the Islamia College, and immediately after went to the railway station to meet Prince Krishna, who was arriving from Devapur. No sooner had they entered the house than he collapsed—refusing food, preferring to rest and have something later, saying: "This is not like me, Old Body."

During the hot hours of the day, they all three rested under the punkah; and after tea the doctor was sent for. In about twelve days it was all over.

There was no black at the funeral. A stately ox-wagon—drawn by two white oxen and driven by a countryman—bore him. The wagon had been lined with branches of the May Tree that was flowering at the time in their garden. The pall that covered him was of white *khaddar* with a border of sky blue. Those who bore him at the cemetery were colleagues and friends; all clothed in white.

The stone that marks his resting-place, in the Old Cemetery at Lahore, bears the words:

He shines like a star among us.

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